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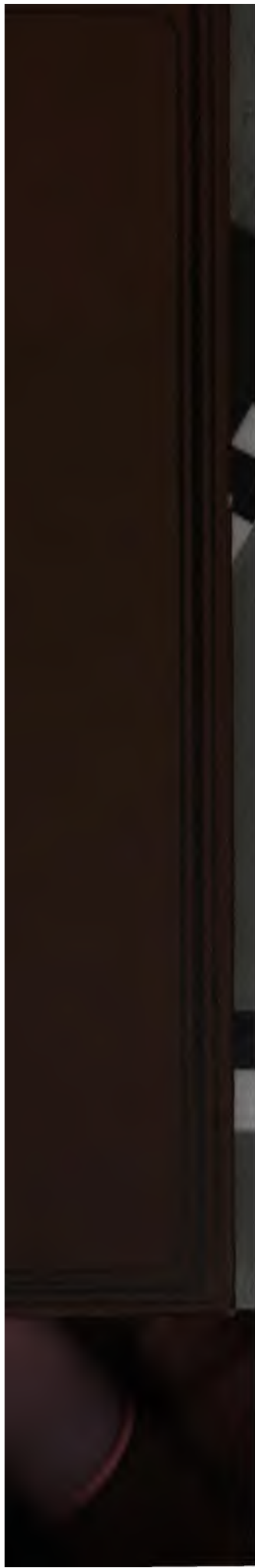
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# **HISTORY OF THE SCOTTISH NATION.**

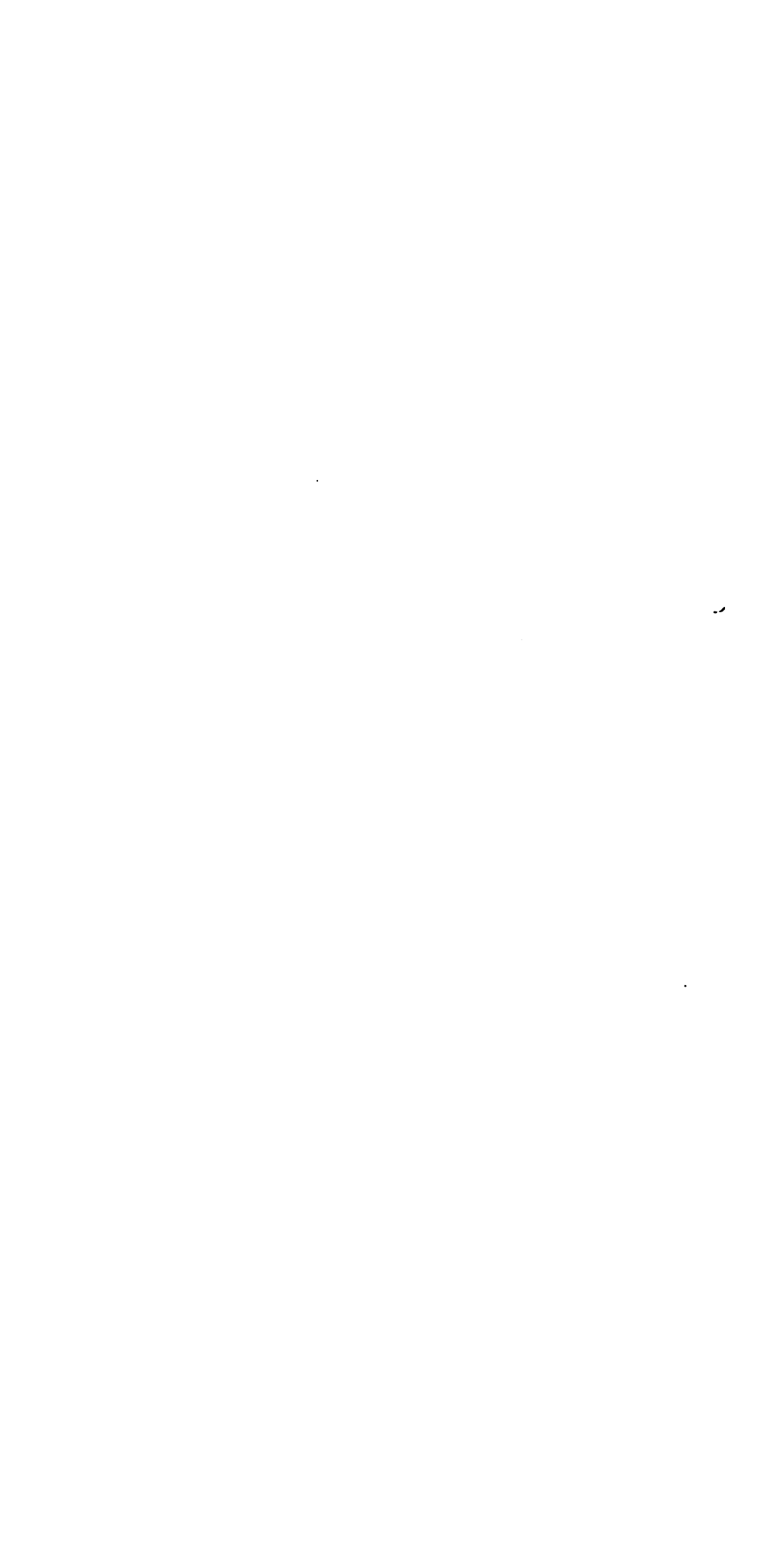


**HISTORY**  
**OF THE**  
**SCOTTISH NATION.**

**BY**  
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**AUTHOR OF "HISTORY OF PROTESTANTISM," ETC.**

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**OF ALEXANDER III., A.D. 1286.**

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# HISTORY OF SCOTLAND.

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## CHAPTER I.

A.D. 843—860.

### UNION OF THE SCOTS AND PICTS—REIGN OF KENNETH MACALPIN.

THE middle of the ninth century saw the Scots and Picts united under the sceptre of Kenneth, the son of Alpin. The advent of this union was long deferred: it was at last consummated in A.D. 843; but even then it received no enthusiastic welcome from those to whom, as might have been foreseen, it brought great increase of power and prestige. The idea of mixing their blood to form one nation, and uniting their arms to establish one central throne, and so taking pledges for the maintenance of peace at home, and the acquisition of influence abroad, however meritorious it seems to us, does not appear to have approved itself to the two races that inhabited the one country of Caledonia. They entertained this idea only when it came to be forced upon them by the stern lessons of the battlefield—a school in which it would seem the education of infant nations must begin.

This union was preceded and prepared by a series of great battles. The question at issue in these fierce conflicts

was, To which of the two nationalities, the Scots or the Picts, shall the supremacy belong, and by consequence the right to govern the kingdom? The wars waged to determine this point ended in a supreme trial of strength on the banks of the Tay near Scone.<sup>1</sup> The engagement was a desperate one. Seven times the Picts assailed, and seven times were they driven back. Their king, Bred, fell in battle, and his armour, afterwards presented to Kenneth MacAlpin, was sent by him to be hung up at Icolmkill.<sup>2</sup> From that bloody field the Scots and Picts emerged one nation. Supremacy, which had been the object aimed at by the combatants till now, was abandoned for the more practical and wiser policy of union. Battle had swept away one of the two thrones which had hitherto borne sway in Caledonia, and the one throne left standing was that of the prince whose progenitor, Aidan, Columba had made to sit on the *Lia-Fail*, or Stone of Destiny, and anointed as the first really independent sovereign of the Scots.

The Picts closed their distinctive historic career when they lost this battle. They were by much the earlier inhabitants of the country, and doubtless regarded the Scots as a *new* people. The Picts or Caledonians, if not the first, were among the first races that found their way to Caledonia after its plains and mountains had looked up from the waters of the flood. Yet this ancient people were content to lose name and record in the annals of a race whose arrival in the mountains of Argyllshire dated only five centuries back. The award of battle had decreed that the elder should serve the younger, and to that award they bowed. Not Pictish blood alone, nor Scottish blood alone,

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, vol. i. 360.

<sup>2</sup> The Chronicle of Huntingdon says that "in his twelfth year Kenneth encountered the Picts seven times in one day, and having destroyed many, confirmed the kingdom to himself."—*Chron. Picts and Scots*, p. 209.

but the two streams commingled, were to form the one blood which was to inspire the valour and fight the battles of the future. Scotland had made a great stride forward, and it was a happy omen of the future career of the united people that in making this new start they put the helm into the hands of that race in whose hearts glowed the faith of Columba.

We refuse to credit the legends which say that battle was succeeded by massacre, and that the glory of victory was dimmed and the fame of the victors tarnished by the utter and cruel extermination of the vanquished people. It is true, no doubt, that from about this time the Picts disappear, or nearly so, from the page of history. Some historians have been able to find no solution of this mystery, save in the supposition that they were swept from off the face of their country by the unsparing and unpitying sword of the victorious Scot. "The extermination of the Picts," says Fordun, "was total and final; not only were their kings and leaders destroyed, but their race and generation, and even their language failed."<sup>1</sup> This is too ready and obvious a solution of the problem to be the true one. It is inherently most improbable. If the Scots of that day were guilty of a crime so enormous, they had sat for three centuries to little purpose, verily, at the feet of Columba and his successors. The deed would have been as impolitic as it would have been cruel. The hour was near when a foe, which their fathers had not known, fierce as the vultures of the land from which he came, was to invade their country. Already

<sup>1</sup> "Sic quidem non solum reges et duces gentis illius deleti sunt, sed etiam stirps et genus adeo cum idiomatis sui lingua defecisse legitur." —*Scoti Chron.*, Lib. iv. Buchanan limits the extirpation of the Picts to those who remained in arms against Kenneth after the great battle which gave him the crown. This would gain all the ends of the conqueror, and we may safely conclude that this was the whole extent of the slaughter.



the piratical fleets of the Norseman were beginning to be seen on their coasts. The Scots, in these circumstances, could have committed no more deplorable error than stamp out a valour which might on a future day do them good service on the battlefield. When the invader should be crowding, horde on horde, into their land, and the clash of swords rose loud, how sorely would the Scots miss those stalwart Caledonian warriors, who, if not locked in the sleep of death, would have contended by their side for a common country, and chased the Norse marauder to his galleys.

Besides, it must be taken into account that massacre in the circumstances would have swept off a full half of the population of Scotland, and left the surface of the country to a large extent unoccupied. Yet we are not conscious of any diminution of the population in the times subsequent to the victory of Kenneth MacAlpin. Scotland is as full of men as before. It has no lack of warriors to fight its battles. Whence come these armies? Not merely from the narrow territories of the Scots in the western border, but from the less mountainous and more thickly peopled districts on the east and north, the very regions which, on the supposition of massacre, had been converted into a desert. How came these parts to be again so quickly populated? Did the Scots, by some marvellously rapid process of increase, fill in that short time the empty land? Or did new races spring from the ashes of the slain to repair the ravages of the sword? These considerations make the theory we are discussing wholly untenable, and force us to the conclusion, which is certainly by much the more agreeable alternative, even, that the Picts, although the more numerous people, loyally accepted the award of battle, and putting the good of country before the considerations of race, permitted the sword, wh

quite enough of blood, to be sheathed, and the wounds of their country to be closed.

It is deserving of our notice, moreover, that the monarch under whom we see the united races beginning their career as the one Scottish nation, was the son of that King Alpin, whose bloody head had been affixed as a trophy of the Pictish arms to the gates of Abernethy. The dishonour put upon the father was wiped out when the son entered these same gates in triumph to fill the throne of an united people, and stretch his sceptre from west to east across the entire country, and from the banks of the Forth to the great ocean stream that rolls betwixt the promontory of Cape Wrath and the precipices of the Orkneys.

It is not always that unions accomplished on the battle-field are lasting. It sometimes happens that when the pressure of the sword is removed the old rivalries and enmities break out afresh, and the nationalities united for a moment again fall asunder, to be parted, it may be, more widely than before. It was not so, however, in the union effected betwixt the Scots and the Picts on the battle-field on the Tay. Nor is it far to seek for the causes that gave that union permanency. In the veins of Kenneth MacAlpin there flowed the blood of both races. A Scot by the father's side, and a Pict by the mother's, both people had a share in him. Moreover, he enjoyed the prestige of having been crowned on the *Lia-Fail*. With that stone were linked the traditions of dominion and rule. These traditions stretched back to the remote times of the Irish monarchs, who were said to have received consecration upon it. What is more, this stone was supposed to possess the mysterious power of imparting a peculiar sacredness and a kingly virtue to the man who was crowned upon it. It had been the privilege of no Pictish monarch to take his

seat on that venerable stone. That honour was reserved for the kings of the Scottish nation alone. In our days the ceremony, though still practised, does not count for much; but in that age it was the better half of the coronation. Where that stone was there was the legitimate sovereign, and there was the rock of the kingdom, in the popular belief at least.

There was another and mightier element of cohesion in the union of which we speak, than either the blood that flowed in the veins of Kenneth MacAlpin, or the virtue of the august chair in which his coronation had taken place. The two peoples were by this time of one faith. When the northern Picts were converted from Druidism to Christianity by Columba, the way was opened for their becoming one with that nation of which the great missionary as a Dalriadan Scot was a member. Columba was the true apostle of union. Pict and Scot had sat together in the school of Iona. Pict and Scot had gone forth together in the same missionary band to evangelise in the fields of France and Germany; and if they could be members of the same church organisation, and sit at the same eucharistic table, surely they could meet in the same national Council, and pay their homage at the foot of the same throne. After all it was the Rock of Iona rather than the Stone at Scone that was the bond of union between the Scots and Picts.

The work of the sword at an end, the labours of the legislator must now begin. This second task, we may well imagine, was even harder than the first. During the fierce struggle for supremacy which had been going on during the previous reigns, many disorders had grown up, doubtless, which called loudly for correction. There had been a loosening of the bonds of society all over the land. In the Highlands especially the clans had enjoyed a larger



than usual measure of license, and were not to be easily broken into orderly and settled courses. Yet the attempt must needs be made. The time was favourable, for the throne was stronger than it had ever before been, and around it was now a united nation. And Kenneth, the chroniclers say, did not let slip the opportunity that offered, but devoted the latter half of his reign to reforming the laws, repressing and punishing crime, and improving the administration of justice, than which no greater boon could he have conferred upon a people whose latent forces, which waited the great occasions of the future, would amply repay all the pains it might cost to discipline and regulate them.

In all ages the glory of the legislator has been held by the wise to surpass that of the conqueror. A code of enlightened jurisprudence is worth more than a hundred victories on the battlefield ; though it may sometimes happen that the rough work of the sword must prepare the way for the quiet and patient labours of legislation. The old chroniclers credit Kenneth with being the author of a body of laws which they dignify by the name of the "Code MacAlpin." The exploits of Kenneth on the battlefield are well authenticated, we can speak only hesitatingly of his labours in the Cabinet. Without attributing to him the work and fame of a great or original legislator, we may concede, nevertheless, that before descending into the tomb he made it his study to leave behind him some monument of his juridical industry and wisdom. Kenneth could hardly avoid, one should think, making some rude essay towards framing laws for the altered circumstances of the now united nation, embodying what was best and wisest in the forms and administration of both peoples.

As the laws of Scotland before the days of Kenneth were ignorant. They are said to have been com-

posed by Ethfin, "son to Eugene with the crooked nose," and that is all we know about them. But our ignorance is no proof that there was no code in Scotland till Kenneth came to the throne. "Wherever society exists," says Mr Cosmo Innes, "life and the person must be protected. Wherever there is property there must be rules for its preservation and transmission. Accordingly in the most ancient vestiges of the written law of Scotland we find constant references to a still earlier common law." The laws relating to land must have been simple indeed, for in those days no one had any personal right in the soil; it was the property of the tribe. But as the people lived by the land, and the staple industry was agriculture, there must have been laws regulating and defining the extent to which the individual members of the tribe might use that soil which was the common property of all. The first approximation to the creation of individual right in the soil, so far as we can perceive, was the grants made to the Columban monasteries. When a Columban Brotherhood was established in a district, a certain amount of land was gifted to it by the King or the Mormaer. The brethren were to cultivate the portion assigned them with their own hands or those of their converts. The monastic glebe was both a means of subsistence to the monastery, and a model farm which served to stimulate and guide the rural industry of the neighbouring population. They dotted the land with Christian nations *in miniature*, exhibiting to the surrounding pagan population the whole economy of Christian civilised life. These grants created no individual rights in the soil. The lands were the property of the Columbites, not as individuals but as a community. Still, as set apart from the tribal territory, and held by a distinct tenure, they were an approximation to the system of personal holdings, which <sup>at</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>came</sup> into use.



The jurisprudence of Ireland was more advanced than that of Scotland. Its political and social arrangements were settled at an earlier period. And what so likely as that the Scots, when they came across to Argyll, brought with them some of the Irish codes. Ireland was their mother country. They turned to it for their models in framing both Church and State. Columba worked on the same lines in evangelising Scotland which Patrick adopted when, a century before, he crossed the sea to spread the light of Christianity in Ireland. We are safe, therefore, in assuming that the "Code MacAlpin" had its first beginnings on the other side of the Irish channel. These beginnings were the foundation on which Kenneth built when, resting from his wars, he set to work to legislate for the united nation. Whatever in these ancient codes was adapted to the new circumstances of his subjects he would preserve; what was lacking in them his own wisdom would supply; and in this way doubtless the code that bears his name came into existence. Only part of it is his; much of it was in being before he began his legislative labours, and much has been added since. The code is the composition of no one man, nor the production of any one age. It reflects the image of various ages.

The spirit of the "MacAlpin Code" and the justice of its enactments may be best shown by a few examples.

"I. That in every shire of the kingdom there should be a judge, for deciding of controversies, well seen in the laws; and that their sons should be brought up in the study of the laws. . . . III. He that is convicted of theft shall be hanged; and he that is guilty of slaughter, beheaded. IV. Any woman convict of a capital crime, shall be either <sup>stoned</sup> or buried alive. V. He that blasphemes God, is disrespectfully of his saints, of his king, or of

his chieftains, shall have his tongue cut out. VI. He that makes a lie to his neighbour's prejudice, shall forfeit his sword, and be excluded the company of all honest men. VII. All persons suspected of any crime, shall suffer the inquest of seven wise and judicious men, or of any number of persons above that, provided the number be odd. . . . IX. All vagabonds, sturdy beggars, and other idle persons, that may, and do not, gain their livelihood by some honest calling, shall be burnt upon the cheek, and whipt with rods. . . . XIV. He that is injurious to his father, by any member of his body, shall have that member cut off, then hanged, and remain unburied above ground. . . . XVI. All witches, jugglers, and others that have any paction with the devil, shall be burnt alive. XVII. No seed shall be sown till it be first well cleansed from all noxious grains. XVIII. He who suffers his land to be over-run with poisonous and hurtful weeds, shall pay, for the first fault, an ox to the common good; for the second, ten; and for the third, he shall be forfeited of his lands. XIX. If you find your comrade and friend killed in the field, bury him; but if he be an enemy, you are not bound to do it. XX. If any beast be found straying in the fields, restore him, either to the owner, the Tocioderach, or searcher after thieves, or to the priest of the parish; and whoever keeps him up for three days, shall be punished as a thief. . . . XXIII. If your neighbour's kine fall a fighting with yours, and if any of them happen to be killed, if it be not known whose cow it was that did it, the homyl-cow (or the cow that wants horns) shall be blamed for it; and the owner of that cow shall be answerable for his neighbour's damage."

There was surely some occult reason for this law. Why the blame should be laid on the cow which nature had made incapable of committing the offence we cannot even conjec-

ture, unless it were that by way of compensating for her want of horns the cow had received a double dose of quarrelsomeness and pugnacity. The laws that follow are without doubt the product of the times subsequent to the reign of Malcolm Canmore. No Columban missionary needed the protection which they provide for the person and life of ecclesiastics. The Columbite Father could journey from north to south without the slightest risk of injury or insult. The reverence entertained for his character and office was a more effectual defence than any enactment could be. But when these laws had birth it is obvious that the state of matters had changed. They are a confession that the clergy were unpopular, that the Roman rites were liable to be condemned and scoffed at, and that the Columban feeling, whatever may be thought of this way of expressing it, still strongly pervaded the Scottish people.

“XXVII. Altars, churches, oratories, images of saints, chapels, priests, and all ecclesiastical persons, shall be held in veneration. XXVIII. Festival and solemn days, fasts, vigils, and all other ceremonies instituted by the church, shall be punctually observed. XXIX. He who injures a churchman, either by word or deed, shall be punished with death. XXX. All sepulchres shall be held in great veneration, and a cross put upon them, that they may not be trampled upon. XXXI. The place where any man is killed or buried, shall be untilled seven years. XXXII. Every man shall be buried according to his quality. If he be a nobleman that has done great actions for the commonwealth, he shall be buried after this manner: Two horsemen shall pass before him to the church; the first mounted upon a white horse, cloathed in the defunct's best apparel, and bearing his armour; the other shall be upon a black horse, in a mourning apparel; and when the corpse is to be in-



tered, he who is in mourning apparel shall turn his back to the altar, and lamentably bewail the death of his master; and then return the same way that he came: the other shall offer his horse and armour to the priest; and then inter the corpse with all the rites and ceremonies of the church."<sup>1</sup>

The bulk of these enactments embody an admirable wisdom. Some of them are obviously borrowed from the great Hebrew lawgiver, with whose code the Columban teachers were, of course, familiar. The enactment which doomed the spot where innocent blood had been shed to lie for seven years untouched by the plough, was well fitted to deepen in the popular mind the abhorrence of murder. Waving with rank and noxious weeds, it warned the wayfarer not to pollute himself by treading on so accursed a spot. Touching the statute against witchcraft, we shudder when we think that for this imaginary crime the terrible doom of burning was awarded and inflicted. But before charging our ancestors with cruelty, it may be well to reflect that up to the beginning or middle of last century, the highest judicial tribunal in Scotland held witchcraft to be a crime, and burned the poor unhappy creatures convicted of it at the stake.

So far this relic of the legislation of early days. Success in arms may be a glory, or it may be an infamy. Whether it is the one or the other, depends altogether on the use to

<sup>1</sup> The Macalpin Laws.—The authenticity of these laws has occasioned some controversy. They are given in Boece (Lib. x.). From Boece they have passed into Wilkins' *Concilia* (i. 179, 180). Innes was at first a supporter of their authenticity, but afterwards changed his opinion so far as regards the form in which they are given by Boece. They are rejected as the work of Kenneth MacAlpin by Pinkerton (*Enquiry*), Hailes (*Historical Memorials*), and Chalmers (*Caledonia*). The more probable opinion is that stated in the text, even, that this code is the production of several ages, Kenneth adding what was required by his own times and the circumstances of his nation.

which the victory is put. But the work of the legislator can hardly be other than beneficial, and therefore glorious. The man who establishes a great and righteous principle, and embodies it in law, is greater than the man who wins a hundred battles. He has done a work for all time. What the sword of one conqueror has set up, the sword of another casts down; but a Truth once established can never be lost. Even should the Gates of Error war against it they cannot overthrow it. It has become the possession of the race, and it goes down the ages ruling and blessing mankind.

The measures of Kenneth at this crisis were admirably adapted to make the two nations coalesce, and give stability to the throne by which henceforward they were to be ruled. The old seat of the Scottish kings was amid the Argyllshire mountains. This was by much too remote for the now enlarged kingdom of Alban. Its continuance there would have weakened the central authority, created impediments to justice, and delayed intelligence when, it might be, the safety of the kingdom depended on its quick transmission. Accordingly Kenneth established his capital at Forteviot, in the valley of the Earn. The spot was about equally distant from both seas. It lay betwixt the Highlands and the Lowlands. The Tay afforded ready access to the ocean. The watchers on the Red Head could espy the Norseman, and quickly notify his approach in the royal palace of Forteviot; and what perhaps was not the least of the considerations that weighed with Kenneth in fixing here the seat of his government, was that the site was within the Pictish dominions, and the residence of the king among them would naturally help to conciliate this brave and ancient race, still smarting from defeat, to the rule of the new dynasty.

The ecclesiastical capital, too, Kenneth removed to an inland and central position. The Rock amid the western



seas, so long the headquarters of Scottish Christianity, was exchanged for a little valley in the southern Grampians, enclosed by woody crags, and watered by the Tay. Kenneth ordained that at Dunkeld should be the seat of the Scottish primacy (851). To impart to the second Iona something of the sanctity and prestige of the first, which the Vikings had made utterly desolate, Kenneth brought hither the relics of Columba.<sup>1</sup> What was of better augury for the renown of his new cathedral and the prosperity of his enlarged dominions, he transported across Drumalban the Columban clergy whose ancestors Nectan had driven out of his kingdom a century and a half before because they refused to conform to the Roman customs. These religious teachers he diffused through the Pictish territory, planting many of them in the places from which their fathers had been expelled. By this tolerant measure he did an act of reparation for a great wrong, and strengthened his own influence among his Pictish subjects.

One other symbol of authority and rule remained to be brought out and put conspicuously before the nation. This was the *Lia-Fail*, or *Fatale Chayre* as the Scots styled it. With the reverence due to so venerable a symbol of dominion, this stone was brought to Scone, that the kings of Scotland might receive consecration upon it, and possess that mysterious and awful sanctity which, in popular belief, belonged to monarchs who had sat in this august seat. These three, the Throne, the Primacy, and the Stone of Consecration, were grouped at the centre of the kingdom, and within the Pictish territory, that the new subjects of Kenneth might feel that the union was complete, and that the Scottish monarchy had crossed Drumalban, not to make a transitory stay, but to find a seat of permanent abode.

<sup>1</sup> Septimo anno regni sui relequias Sancti Columbæ transportavit ad ecclesiam quam construxit.—*Chron. Picts and Scots*, p. 8.

After these labours the Scottish nation and its monarch enjoyed a few years of peace. We see the good king living tranquil days in his palace of Forteviot, in the quiet valley which the Earn waters, and the heights of Dupplin on the one hand, and the swellings of the Ochils on the other so sweetly embosom. On the west, the long vista guides the eye to where Drumalban rears its summits, and looks down on the two nations which it no longer divides. We read, indeed, of some raids of King Kenneth in his latter years into the country of the Saxons beyond the Forth, for that river was still the southern boundary of Alban.<sup>1</sup> But the record of these incursions is so doubtful, and their bearing, even granting they took place, on Scottish affairs is so insignificant, that they hardly deserve historic mention. Kenneth reigned sixteen years after the union of the two nations. He had served his country equally by his valour in the field and his wisdom in the closet. He died in 860 in his palace at Forteviot. His mortal malady was fistula.

The tidings that King Kenneth was dead would fly far and fast over Scotland, and wherever they came they would awaken sincere and profound sorrow. There was mourning in Dalriada, which, sixteen years before, had seen the son of the slaughtered Alpin descend its mountains to begin that campaign which had ended in a union that decreed that there should no more be battle betwixt Scot and Pict. There was mourning in Pictavia, which, though compelled to bow to the sword of Kenneth, had found that his sceptre was just and equitable. There was mourning amid the wild hills of the north onward to the strand of Caithness, for the clans had learned that the monarch who reigned in the halls of Forteviot was not a conqueror but a father. And now come his obsequies. What a multi-

<sup>1</sup> *Chron. Picts and Scots*, p. 8.

tude gathers at the royal gates of Forteviot! Mormaer and Toiseach, with their respective clans, from the Pentland to the Forth, are there, including warriors who aforetime, it may be, had mustered to fight against the man whose dust they are now carrying in profound grief to the grave. The vast procession is marshalled, and proceeds with slow and stately march, along the valley westward. The pibroch flings out its wail of woe, summoning dweller in hamlet and glen to join the funeral cortege and swell the numbers of this great mourning. The procession wends its way betwixt lakes and mountains which have since become classic, though then they were unsung by bard or poet. Many days the march continues, for the way is long to the royal sepulchres amid the western seas. At last the desolate and lonely isle is reached. Iona is still the proudest fane in Europe, despite that the Vikings have ravaged it with fire and sword, and left it nothing but its indestructible name. The greatest of the Scottish kings, and even monarchs of other lands, leave it as their dying request to be taken to Iona, and buried in the Isle which the memory of Columba like a mighty presence still overshadows. We see the funeral party arrive at Port na Churraich; they pass along the "Street of the Dead,"<sup>1</sup> and they deposit the remains of Kenneth in the burial place of the kings who have sat on the stone of destiny. They leave him there, the thunder of the Atlantic singing his requiem, for psalm and chant have ceased amid the fallen shrines of Iona.

<sup>1</sup> Portions of this road, by which the royal dead were conveyed from Port na Churraich to the place of sepulture, exist at this day.



## CHAPTER II.

A.D. 860—877.

DONALD—CONSTANTIN—FIRST BATTLE WITH THE DANES.

THE good king Kenneth has gone to his grave, and the light would seem to have departed with him. No sooner is he laid in the tomb than the shadow of an eclipse falls upon the historic landscape, and for some time we travel onwards in comparative darkness. Several successive reigns pass away before we can see distinctly what is passing on the soil of Scotland. The chroniclers who narrate the transactions of these dark centuries—and they are the darkest of Scottish history—were not eye-witnesses of what they record; they gleaned their information from a variety of traditional and monumental sources, and however painstaking and truth-loving they may have been, it was impossible for them to avoid being at times wrong in their conclusions, and mistaken as to their facts.<sup>1</sup> We are all the more sensible of the

<sup>1</sup> When Malcolm Canmore died (1093), Scotland had no written history of any sort. The school of Iona in the sixth and seventh centuries had produced a numerous class of expert and elegant penmen and copyists, who furnished their countrymen with transcripts of the Scriptures, commentaries, and books for Divine service. Scottish civil history has its first beginnings in the charters granted to Abbeys. The oldest charter extant is by King Duncan (1095) to the monks of Durham. Then follows a charter by David I. The "Chronicle of Mailross," written in the Abbey of Melrose in the thirteenth century, is, says Mr Cosmo Innes, "the most ancient Scotch writing of the nature of continuous history that is now extant." State papers begin in the reign of Alexander III.,

darkness in which we find ourselves from its contrast to the clear light that irradiated our country a few centuries previous, and which makes the times it brightened, though in reality far more remote, seem to us much more near.

Great events bring their own light with them, and write their own history. This is especially true of events which have the *spiritual* for their basis, and which summon into action the souls rather than the bodies of men. Such epoch has an electric brilliancy which keeps it above the horizon despite ages of intervening darkness. How distinct and palpable is still the Scotland of the sixth and seventh centuries! We follow as vividly the voyage of Columba across the Irish Sea to the shores of Iona, as if we had sailed with him in the osier-ribbed vessel which carried him across. We watch from day to day the rising walls of that humble edifice within which he is to gather the youth of many lands, and there train them in a theology drawn from the pure fountains of Holy Scripture. We become his companions when he goes forth on his missionary tour among the Picts, and see him roll aside the darkness of Druidism from the north of Scotland, and revive the dying lamp of the faith in the Lowlands. Our interest in his labours grows as his work draws nigh its completion, and we see Scotland dotted with Columban brotherhoods, schools of Christian knowledge, and centres of Christian industry and art. We are parted from the men who accomplished this great work by thirteen centuries, yet we think of them as if they had been our

or later half of the thirteenth century. Next comes the "Poem of the Bruce," the *Scotch Odyssey* by John Barbour, Archdeacon of Aberdeen (1375-1395). Then follows Andrew Wyntoun (1420), Prior of Lochleven. His history has little value as a poem, but is very valuable as a chronicle. In the end of the fourteenth century, John Fordun laid the foundation of Scottish history in his *Scoti-Chronicon*. Hector Boece wrote in 1533. His work is in classical Scotch prose.

contemporaries, and had only recently rested from their labours.

But with the death of Kenneth MacAlpin, or rather with the decay of the Columban age, there comes a great change. Scotland hardly looks the same country as when Columba stood at the head of its scholars and Kenneth MacAlpin lead its armies. It has receded into the far distance, and we stand gazing into a haze. Scotland, it is true, does not lack kings. Kenneth MacAlpin has successors who have sat upon the *Lia-Fail* at Scone, but they pass before us like phantoms. Nor does Scotland lack warriors; at least it does not lack battles. The land rings incessantly with the clash of arms. But if the sword is busy, we fear the plough rests. The acres under tillage diminish instead of multiplying, and fields which had been redeemed from the wilderness by the skilful and diligent husbandry of men who had learned their agriculture as well as their Christianity from the elders of Iona, fall back again into the desert and become covered with bracken, while the wild boar, dislodged from his covert, comes back to his old haunt and lies in wait for the traveller. The lamp has waxed dim, and its flame sunk low in the schools of learning and in the sanctuaries of religion. We hear of armies crossing the Tweed to fight for the doubtful possession of Northumbria, and extend the Scottish dominions to the banks of the Tyne, or even the Humber, but hardly do we hear of missionary bands in their home-spun woollen garments and sandals of cow hide, setting forth, as aforetime, from the Scottish shore to carry the name of Scot and the faith of Culdee to countries afar off.

The moment was critical. All that had been won—and much had been won—was on the point of being lost. Scotland had begun to work its way back to its former condition of divided and warring nationalities. So would it have



appeared to an onlooker. But no ; Pict and Scot must not part company. If they would fulfil their destiny they must contend side by side on the same battlefield, and feel the purifying and elevating influence of a great common cause, prosecuted through toil, through painful sacrifices, through disheartening reverses, till, borne to victory, it has been crowned with complete achievement. It is not the success that comes with a rush, but the success that comes as the fruit of slow, patient, and persistent labours and conflicts that anneals, hardens, and at last perfects nations destined to rise to a first place, and to render the highest services to mankind. It is on such a process that Scotland is about to be taken. It is to be put upon the anvil and kept on it for seven generations, till Pict and Scot shall not only have mingled their blood but fused their souls, and for the narrow aims of Clan substituted the wider and nobler aspirations of Nation.

Even before Kenneth was laid in the sepulchral vaults of Iona, the Scots had warning that the clouds were gathering, and were sure to break in storm. They had seen what the sea could bring forth. Ships of ominous build, swift as the eagle, and as greedy of prey, had once and again appeared off their coast, and sent a thrill of terror along the sea-board. These unwelcome visitors would retreat, and after disappearing in the blue main would suddenly return, as if they took pleasure in tormenting their destined victims before pouncing upon them. To come and see and go back would not always suit the purpose of these plundering sea-kings. One day they would strike. Already they had swooped upon the extreme north-western parts, and struck their cruel talons into the quivering land. Iona gone, its monks slaughtered, and its buildings blackened with fire, remained the monument of their visit. These

were the "hammers" which by long-continued and terrible blows were to weld into homogeneity and consistency the rugged and unruly mass of humanity that occupied Scotland.

The first to take his seat on the Stone of Scone and assume the government of the kingdom after Kenneth MacAlpin was his brother Donald. Had the nation forgotten the services of the father, seeing they pass by the son and place the brother on the vacant throne? No, Scotland is not unmindful of what it owes to Kenneth MacAlpin; but in those days the succession to the crown was regulated by what is known as the law of Tanistry. This was a wise law in times so unsettled as those of which we write, and must have largely helped to steady the nation. When it happened that a monarch died leaving a son to succeed him who was of tender years, it was held unwise to put the sceptre into his hands. The vigour of manhood was needed to cope with the saucy and turbulent chieftains of the then Scotland, and in the hands of a child the sceptre would have run great risk of being contemned. On the death of a monarch, therefore, his nearest collateral relative, or that one of the royal family who was deemed fittest for the office, was selected, and the son meanwhile had to wait till years had given him experience, and the death of the reigning king had opened his way to the throne.<sup>1</sup>

As regards the prince now on the Scottish throne, nearly all we can say of him is that he wore the crown for four years. He stands too far off in point of time, and he is seen through too thick a haze to permit us to take his measure. Historians have given us two different and opposite portraits of King Donald, painting him, probably, as they wished him to have been, rather than as he really was, for they had

<sup>1</sup> *Johannis Major, Historia Britanniae*, Lib. iii. cap. ii. p. 90. Edin., 1740.

hardly any better means of judging of his true character than we have. Boece and Buchanan represent him as given up to all sorts of vicious indulgences, as governed entirely by low flatterers, and as neglecting the business of the state, and wasting his own time and the public revenue on "hunters, hawkers, and parasites." The scandals of the court came at last to such a head that the discontented chieftains among the Picts thought that the time had come for asserting their independence and restoring their ancient monarchy. With this view they formed an alliance with the Saxons of England, assuring them that the northern kingdom was ready to drop into their arms would they only unite their forces with theirs in the effort to wrest the ancient Pictland from the Scottish sway. The Saxons marched northward as far as the Forth. Had the raid succeeded it is probable that the Saxons would have kept the country to themselves, and left the mutinous and treacherous Picts to find a kingdom where they could. Happily the arms of Donald prevailed, and Scotland remained the united nation which Kenneth had made it.

In Donald, as the old chroniclers have striven to reproduce him from the mists of a remote time, we have, as we have said, a picture with two totally unlike sides. On the side which we have been contemplating there is shown us a profligate prince and a kingdom falling in pieces. Turn the obverse. We are startled by the grand image that now meets us. The voluptuary and trifler is gone, and in his room is a prince, temperate, brave, patriotic, sustaining the state by his energy and virtues. So have Fordun and Winton, both of whom wrote before Boece, represented Donald. They tell us, too, that not only was he careful to preserve the splendid heritage of a united people which his brother had left him, but that he was studious to keep war



at a distance by cultivating friendship with neighbouring kings. We make no attempt to reconcile these two widely divergent accounts. We see in them the proof that the real Donald is not known, and now never can be known. In a question of this sort it is the earliest authorities who are held to speak with the greater weight, seeing they stand nearest the sources of information ; and as it is the earlier chroniclers that give us the more favourable portrait of Donald, he is entitled to the presumption thence arising in his favour. Donald closed his short reign of four years—too short if he was the virtuous prince which some believe him to have been, but too long if he was the monster of vice which others say he was—in the year 864. The rock in the western seas received his ashes.

On the death of Donald the succession returned to the direct line. We now see Constantin, the son of Kenneth MacAlpin, assuming the crown. The memories of the great father lend prestige to the throne of the son, and give authority to his sceptre. And, verily, there was need of all the vigour which could possibly be infused into the government of the kingdom, for the hour was near when Scotland would have to sustain a severer strain than any to which it had been subjected since the days of the Romans. The tempest which had rolled up from England in the previous reign, and which had discharged itself on the southern shores of the Forth, was a summer blast compared with the hailstorms which were gathering in the countries on the other side of the North Sea. The battle with the Norseman was now to begin in deadly earnest. A few premonitory blows, sharp and quick, had the Viking dealt on the borders of the country, but now he was to assemble all his hordes, and come against the land like a cloud, and strike at the heart of the kingdom. For two centuries to come the kings of

Scotland would have other things to think of than the wine cup and the boar hunt, and the Scots would do well to reserve their blood for worthier conflicts than a raid into Northumbria.

Before the great battle opened Constantin found that he had a little war on his hands at home. The district of Lochaber suddenly burst into flames. This provincial conflagration had been kindled by a Highlander named MacEwan, whom Constantin had appointed to be governor of the district. The ambition of this man was not to be bounded by the narrow confine of his Highland principality. He had higher aims than he could find scope for in Lochaber. A number of discontented men, who too doubtless thought that their great merits had been overlooked, gathered round him and offered him their help in his attempt on the throne. Constantin had timely notice of the tempest that was brewing amid the mountains of Lochaber, and without giving it time to burst, he crossed the hills and appeared on the scene of the disturbance. MacEwan, who did not dream that his treason had travelled as far as the valley of the Earn, and was known in the Palace of Fort-Teviot, was surprised to find himself face to face with his sovereign. His followers dispersing, left their leader to enjoy alone whatever promotion Constantin might be pleased to confer upon him. That promotion was such as his services deserved. He was hanged before the Castle of Dunstafnage, which he had made his headquarters, and the rebellion expired.

After this appeared a portent of even worse augury which struck alarm into the heart of both king and people. The tempest this time came not from the land but from the sea. The Danes had landed on the coast of Fife, and had already begun their bloody work. The tidings of what had happened sent a shock through the whole kingdom. Contrary to their

usual custom the invaders had made their descent on the eastern coast, where they were not looked for, and as the Scotland of that age had no army of observation, their landing was unopposed. They held no parley with the natives, they offered no terms of submission, but unsheathing their swords, they began at once to hew their way into the interior of the kingdom. Their course lay along the fertile vale of the Leven, and its green beauty under their feet quickly changed into ghastly red. The cruel Dane was merciful to none, but his heaviest vengeance fell upon the ministers of the Christian Church. A considerable number of ecclesiastics is said to have made good their escape to the Isle of May, but their persecutors followed them thither, and remorselessly butchering them, converted the little isle into a horrible shambles. Possibly the Danes deemed their slaughter a pleasing sacrifice to their god Odin, for paganism in all its forms is a cruel and bloodthirsty thing.

King Constantin, assembling his army, marched to stay the torrent of Scottish blood which the Danish sword had set flowing. He found the Danish host divided into two bodies, and led by Hungan and Hubba, the two brothers of the Danish king. One corps was robbing and slaughtering along the left bank of the Leven, and the other was engaged with equal ardour in that to them most congenial work on the right bank of the same stream. Constantin led his soldiers against the Danish force on the left. Recent rains had swollen the Leven, and the Danes on the other side durst not tempt the angry flood by crossing over to the assistance of their comrades. Left alone with the Scottish army they were utterly routed, and Constantin inflicted a severe chastisement upon them, cutting them off almost to a man.

When the Danes on the right side of the river saw how



complete was the victory of the Scots they fell back before them, and resolved to make their final stand in the neighbourhood of their ships. Their fleet lay at anchor in Balcombie Bay, in the eastern extremity of Fife, two miles beyond the town of Crail. A sweet and peaceful scene is this spot, seen under its normal conditions. The blue sea, the bright sandy beach, the vast crescent of rocks and shingle, steep and lofty, that sweeps round it, a full mile in circuit, lying, moreover, in the bosom of a far mightier bay of which the southern arm finds its termination in the promontory of St Abbs, and the northern in the precipices of the Red Head, make as fine a piece of coast scenery as is almost anywhere to be beheld. Yet dire was the carnage that day enacted on this usually quiet and secluded spot.

The Danes strengthened their position by drawing round the bay a-top, a bristling barricade of rocks and stones, with which the spot plentifully supplied them. They dug entrenchments on the level plain outside their bulwark, which further strengthened their camp. Immediately beneath, in the bay,—they might almost drop a pebble upon their decks,—were moored their galleys, ready to carry them across the sea, if the day should go against them, and they lived to go back to the country whence they had come. The Danes fought for life, the Scots for country, and both with fury and desperation. The battlefield was the open plain above the bay, in our day an expanse of rich corn fields, all the richer, doubtless, from the blood that then so abundantly watered it. The hottest of the strife would rage at the barrier of boulders thrown up to break the onset of the Scots. It was the object of the latter to drive the Danes over their own rampart, and roll them down the slope into the sea ; but the invaders made good their footing on the level ground, and forcing back the body of their assail-

ants, escaped the destruction that yawned in their rear. The slain lay all about, and the blood of Scot and Dane trickling down in the same stream dyed the waters of the bay, and gave terrible intimation to those in charge of the galleys of the desperate character of the struggle that was going on on shore.

The good fortune of Constantin did not attend him in this second battle. This was owing to no lack of spirit or bravery on his part, but grew out of the fret and discontent that continued to smoulder in the Pictish mind against the sway of the Scottish sceptre.

A contingent of Picts is said to have left the field while the battle was going on, and their desertion disheartening their comrades, turned the scale in the fortunes of the day. When the battle had ended, Scotland was without a king. As Constantin was fighting bravely in the midst of his fast-falling ranks, he was surrounded by the Danes, seized and dragged to a cave in the rocks, and there beheaded. Ten thousand Scots are said to have perished in that battle. Of the Danes the slain would be even more numerous, for the entire force on the left of the Leven was cut in pieces in the first battle, and considering how desperately the second was contested, the Danish dead in it would count at least man for man with the Scots. The Danes sought no closer acquaintance with Scotland meanwhile. Making their way to their ships, they set sail, leaving behind them a land over which rose the wail of widow and orphan, to be answered back by an equally loud and bitter cry from the homes to which they were hastening, as soon as they should have arrived there with the doleful tidings they were carrying thither.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> We have great faith in the traditions of a country, if they are natural, and are corroborated by some monumental evidence, and are not tainted



The body of the king was found next day. A sorrowing nation carried it to Iona, and laid it in the sepulchres of the Scottish kings. It was only twenty years since the funeral procession of Kenneth MacAlpin had been seen moving along the same tract, in greater pomp, it may be, but not in profounder grief. The father had died on the bed of peace, the son had gone down in the storm of battle, and now both rest together in the sacred quiet of the little isle. Constantin had reigned fourteen years, dying in A.D. 877.<sup>1</sup>

by the element of miracle. The chronicler with his pen may put any number of legends he pleases on his page, but nothing but the event itself can write its story on the face of a country, so as to take hold of the belief of its inhabitants and be handed down by them. Of this battle we have still living traditions in that part of the country. The inhabitants of the east of Fife point out the cave amid the rocks of Balcombe Bay in which Constantin was murdered, and the trenches and embankments of the Danes at the head of the bay are still traceable, after the lapse of a thousand years. They are styled by the country people the Danes' dykes. See also Johannis Major, *Historia Majoris Britanniae*, Lib. iii. cap. ii. p. 90. 1740.

<sup>1</sup> Dr Skene (*Celtic Scotland*, i. 327), guiding himself by the *Ulster Annals* and the *Chronicle of the Picts*, relates this campaign differently. He finds that the Danes had been driven from Dublin by the Norwegians; that they crossed to Alban, and entered the country by the valleys watered by the Forth and the Teith; that they fought a battle with the Scots at Dollar; that they drove the Scottish army before them to the north-eastern extremity of Fife, where the great battle was fought in which Constantin lost his life. There are, however, very great difficulties in the way of this theory. The Danes, of course, would cross to Scotland in their ships. On arriving, and beginning their march through the whole breadth of the country, what did they do with their fleet? They could only send it round the north of Scotland by the Pentland, to wait the arrival of the army on the east coast. Considering the hazard of a march through a country whose whole population was hostile, were not the Danes more likely to accompany their ships, and make their assault in unbroken force on the east coast, whence, if they were beaten, they had an open road to their own country? It is extremely unlikely that the expelled colony of Danes should have been able to drive the Scots before them across the entire island, and that the Scots should make a stand only when they had no alternative but fight or be driven into the sea. These improbabilities are so great that we may venture to say they never took place.

Such was the first burst of the great storm. The clouds had rolled away for the moment, but they would return, not once, nor twice, but many times in years to come. Henceforward the Scottish peasant must plough his fields and reap his harvests with the terror of the Dane hanging over him. At any moment this flock of Norse vultures might rise out of the sea, and swoop down upon his land and make it their prey. He must be watchful, and sober, and provident. He must care for the interests of his country, and know that his individual security and defence lay not in the strength of his clan, but in the strength of his nation ; in the unity and power of all its clans, near and remote. He must cease to seek occasions of quarrelling, lest, haply, the common enemy should come suddenly, and finding him fighting with his neighbour, should have an easy victory over both.

The Danes of that day were the most powerful of the German nations. Their narrow territory, overstocked with inhabitants, was continually in labour to relieve itself by sending forth new swarms of piratical adventurers. Its youth, hardy and martial, were always ready to embark in any enterprise that offered them the chance of waging battle and of gathering spoil. They had been born to slay or to be slain, and better not to have lived than to live and not to have mingled in the carnage of the battlefield. Their welcome at the gates of Valhalla, and their place among its heroes, would, they knew, be in strict accordance with their prowess in war and the enemies they had slaughtered. Such was their ethical creed. They troubled themselves with no questions of casuistry touching the rights of the inhabitants of a country marked out for invasion. All lands were theirs if only their sword could give them possession. If it was a Christian land the point was so much the clearer, for in that case it belonged, without dispute, to the people of Odin,



and nothing could be more pleasing to this deity than that his worshippers should take possession of it, and consecrate it by the erection of his altars. Such were the people that hung upon the flank of the Scotland of the ninth and following century.

It is after a different fashion that the overcrowded or hungry populations of our day go about the business of seeking out and occupying new settlements. Crossing the sea with his wife and little ones, the emigrant sets to work with his axe, felling not men but trees, and having cleared a space in the primeval forest, he sets up his homestead, and begins those operations of spade or plough which soon teach the earth around his humble log-house to wave with cornfields or blossom with orchards. But so prosaic a mode of finding for himself a new home was little to the taste of the emigrant of the ninth century. The country that could be won without battle was scarce worth possessing. The claimant of new territories in that age crossed the main in a galley blazoned with emblems of terror: the prow the head of horrid dragon, and the stern the twisted tail of venomous snake. The earth grew red at his approach. The invaded region was cleared out with the sword, and its new occupant set himself down on the gory soil.

This fate had already been meted out to South Britain. Descending on it with the swift and destructive force of one of their own hailstorms, the Anglo-Saxons made the country their own. They cleared out the inhabitants with the summary agencies of fire and sword, and driving a few miserable remnants of the population into the corners of the land, they gave to the country a new race and a new name. They called it Anglo-land. A similar fate had been allotted to Scotland by the Dane. Its ancient people were to be hewn down. Some few might be spared to be hewers of

wood and drawers of water to the conqueror, but the Dane was to be its lord and master. Its ancient name was to be blotted out: the sanctuaries of the Culdee were to be razed and the shrines of Thor set up in their room. It was this tremendous possibility that made the two nationalities coalesce. They were fused in the fire. Every battle with the Dane, every heap of slain which his sword piled up, and every shipload of booty which he carried across the sea, only helped to strengthen their cohesion and fan their patriotism. The question was no longer whether shall Scot or Pict take precedence in the government of the realm? The question now had come to be, shall either of the two be suffered to rule it, or indeed to exist in it? Shall the name of Caledonia cease from the mouths of men, and shall the country in all time coming be known as Dane-land?

## CHAPTER III

A.D. 877—889.

### ETH—GRIG—PICTISH PERSECUTION OF COLUMBAN CHURCH—TOLERATION.

WHEN Scotland looked up from the bankfield of Crail there appeared on every side nothing but disaster and apparent ruin. The throne empty, the flower of the army fallen on the field, and the adhesion of the Picts become doubtful, the Union appeared to be in greater peril than at any time since the great battle on the banks of the Tay, which brought the Scots and Picts together in one nation. But the dynasty of Fergus is not to end here: the little country must gather up its strength and repair its losses before the Danes have time to return and strike a second blow.

The first care of the Scots was to select one to fill the vacant throne. The choice of the nation fell on Eth or Aodh, the brother of Constantin. This prince had been present in the recent battle, and when the king fell he rallied the broken ranks and led them off the field. Of all his exploits this only has come down to us. He is known as Eth of the Swift Foot, from an abnormal nimbleness of limb which enabled him to outstrip all his fellows. John Major calls him an Asahel, and tells us that no one could keep pace with him in running.<sup>1</sup> Of Eth, as of all the

<sup>1</sup> *Historia Britanniæ*, Lib. iii. cap. ii. p. 90.

Scottish monarchs of the time, very different portraits have been drawn. It were vain to plunge into the darkness of the ninth century in search of the real Eth. He is gone from us for ever, but we have no proof that he conspicuously possessed the talents fitting him for governing in the unsettled and unhappy times in which it fell to his lot to occupy the throne. A brief year summed up the period of his reign, and "Swift Foot" was carried to Iona.

While events of great importance are passed over as unworthy of record, the early chroniclers often detain us with occurrences of no significance whatever, especially if they have about them as much of the marvellous as to make them pass for prodigies. If we may credit these writers, the earth, the sea, and the air were, in those ages, continually sending forth supernatural omens to warn or to terrify men. During the reign of Eth a shoal of the fish called "sea monks" appeared on the coast. These denizens of the deep had their name from the resemblance they bore to the cowed fraternity whose habitat is the land. They looked like an army of monks immersed in the waves and struggling to reach the shore. The peasantry who regarded them as the certain prognosticators of disaster, beheld their approach with alarm if not with horror. There was no need surely to send a shoal of sea-monks to foretell calamities which were already palpably embodied in the war galleys of the Danes, in the graves at Balcombie Bay, and the sounds of grief that still echoed in castle and cottage throughout Scotland.

With the next reign came better complexioned times. The deep wound Scotland had received in the battle-field of Crail began to be healed. We now find Grig, or, as he is sometimes termed, Gregory, on the throne. The lineage of this man cannot be certainly traced. The presumption is that he was outside the royal line, or at best but distantly



related to it, and that he opened his way to the crown by his ambition and talents, favoured by the distractions of the time. He stood up amongst the kings of Scotland as Cromwell at a later day stood up among the monarchs of England, to show that men not "born in the purple" may nevertheless possess the gift of governing, and that nations are not shut up to accept a foolish or a wicked prince as their master simply because he happens to be sprung of a family which has given kings to them aforetime. The vigour and firmness of Gregory steadied a reeling state, and brought back to the throne the prestige it had lost during the previous reign. He had won his high position over not a few rivals, but he knew how to conquer enemies by pardoning them. The first act of his administration was to issue an indemnity to all who had been in arms against him—an act of grace which augured well for his future reign.

The reign of Gregory has been made famous by a law passed by him in favour of the ministers of religion. It is recorded of him in the "Pictish Chronicle," and in the "Register of the Monastery of St Andrews," both ancient documents of the highest authority, that "he was the first who gave freedom to the Scottish Church which had been in bondage till that time, according to the rule and custom of the Picts."<sup>1</sup> The church of those days is kept very much out of sight. The old chroniclers, so full of talk on other things, are very reticent on this subject. Columba and Iona would seem to have fallen out of their memory. But there come in the course of their narrations incidental statements which are a lifting of the veil, and which give us a momentary glimpse of the position of churchmen and the state of

<sup>1</sup> "Hic primus dedit libertatem Ecclesie Scoticanæ, qui sub servitute erat usque ad illud tempus, ex constitutione et more Pictorum."—*Chron. Picts and Scots*, p. 151.

religion. This is one of those incidental statements. It is brief but pregnant, and warrants one or two not unimportant conclusions.

First of all, it is noteworthy that this is the first time that we meet in history the term the "Scottish Church." This alone is of great significance. We have not yet met the name "Scotland" as applied to the whole country. It is still Alban. The church takes precedence of the country, and we read of the "Scottish Church" before we read of the "Scottish Kingdom." There can be no question that the "church" which we here see Gregory liberating from Pictish thralldom was the church of which the Columban clergy were the ministers. There was as yet no foreign priesthood in the country. There were, it is true, a few propagandist missionaries and itinerant monks in the land doing business for Rome, but their proselytising labours were confined mostly to the court of princes or the monastery of the abbot, where they strove to insinuate themselves into confidence by an affectation of a sanctity which they did not possess, and all the while scheming to supplant the clergy of the nation by accusing them of practising a worship of barbarous rites, and throwing ridicule upon them as wearing the tonsure of Simon Magus. They were shut out, however, from carrying on any great scheme of propagandism among the people by their ignorance of the tongue of the country. No ecclesiastical body at this hour in Scotland had any pretensions to the status of a church, save that spiritual organisation which had its cradle in the Scotch colony of Dalriada, its centre in the Scotch school of Iona, and which from that centre had spread itself over the Scottish land. This church had all along been served mostly by Scotsmen in both its home and foreign field, and when this little sentence lifts the veil in the end of the ninth century, it is seen still existing in



its corporate condition, and receiving royal recognition as the National Church of Scotland. It may be that neither trunk nor bough are so robust and vigorous as they were in the sixth and seventh centuries, but there stands the old tree still, and there around it are the Scottish people, and in this royal edict we see room made for its spreading itself more widely abroad. We may venture to infer further that the "Church of Scotland" of that age enjoyed a measure of liberty among the Scots which was denied it among the Picts. The bondage in which the "Scottish Church" is here seen to be held is spoken of as a bondage distinctively Pictish. Whatever may have been the nature of that bondage, which it is not easy to conjecture from so brief a statement, it would seem to have been restricted to Pictland, and unknown in the territory of the Scots, where a more liberal treatment was adopted toward the clergy.

It may throw a little light on this matter if we recall an occurrence that had taken place among the Picts a century and a half before the days of Gregory, the first liberator of the Scottish Church. Nectan was at that time on the Pictish throne (A.D. 717). There came to Nectan's court certain missionaries, "ecclesiastical touters," from the South, who cried up the Roman rites in general, and mightily extolled in particular the tonsure of Rome and her Easter celebration, and as loudly decried all the usages of the Scottish Church. "The rites of your clergy," said these strangers to the Pictish monarch, "have no efficacy in them, and are displeasing to the Deity. Your priests have no true tonsure and no true Easter. The courses they follow are contrary to the universal Church; we come to lead you and your people into the right path, that you may no longer offend God and hazard your salvation by the observance of a barbarous ritual." These words had all the more influence with Nectan that

they were fortified by a letter from Abbot Ceolfrid of Jarrow, Northumbria, who was of great repute as a canonist and churchman, and to whom King Nectan had previously written on the subject, for he had begun to weary of the simple Columban rites, and to long for the more ornate ceremonies and the more pompous worship of Rome, with which he desired to ally himself. It required, therefore, no elaborate argument to make a convert of a man who was already more than half convinced. Having tasted the new wine of Rome, the juice of the vine of Iona had lost its relish for him. The new, said Nectan, is better than the old.

The historian Bede has given a minute and graphic description of the scene, and in doing so he is narrating what took place in his own day. The letter of Abbot Ceolfrid is addressed in as magniloquent terms as if the monk had been writing to a great Eastern potentate instead of a Pictish king. The inscription runs: "To the most excellent Lord and most glorious King Naiton." "This letter," says Bede, "having been read in the presence of King Naiton, and many others of the most learned men, and carefully interpreted into his own language by those who could understand it, he is said to have much rejoiced at the exhortation, in so much that, rising from the midst of his great men who sat about him, he knelt on the ground, giving thanks to God that he had been found worthy to receive such a present from the land of the Angles, and, said he, 'I knew indeed before that this was the true celebration of Easter; but now I so fully know the reason for the observance of this time, that I seem convinced that I knew very little of it before. Therefore I publicly declare and protest to you who are here present, that I will for ever continually preserve this time of Easter, together with all my nation; and I do decree that this tonsure, which we have heard is most reasonable, shall



be received by all the clergy of my kingdom." Accordingly he immediately performed by his regal authority what he had said. For the cycles of nineteen years were by public command sent through all the provinces of the Firth to be transcribed, learnt, and observed, the erroneous revolutions of eighty-four years being everywhere abolished. All the ministers of the altar and the monks adopted the canonical tenure; and the nation being thus reformed, rejoiced as being newly placed under the direction of Peter, the most blessed prince of the Apostles, and made secure under his protection."<sup>2</sup>

Bede drops the curtain while the scene is at its best, the king praising and giving thanks, and the nobles and people joining their acclamations with their sovereign over this great religious reformation! And verily they might well give vent to their joy, for a wonderful feat truly had been accomplished in an astonishingly brief space, and by amazingly simple and summary means! A whole clergy had been transformed into orthodox by a few "clips" of the scissors fetched from Rome. The festivals of the Church had been placed on the sound and solid basis of a reformed calendar; and a kingdom, aforesaid blighted and mocked with heretical and barbarous rites, and ministered to by priests with the horrid tinsure of Simon Magus, had become enriched and fructified by ordinances full of efficacy and mystic grace, and served by priests without doubt holy, seeing they have "holiness" written upon their heads by the scissors which have imprinted upon them the orthodox tinsure. Well might Pictavia rejoice! It has opened a new epoch! And well might "the most excellent Lord and most glorious King Naiton" rejoice, seeing he has found—what has he found!—that Word which maketh wise unto salvation! that Word which a

<sup>2</sup> Bede, *Hist. Scot.* lib. v. c. 2. vol.

king of old made a lamp to his feet? that Word which has showed to nations the road to greatness?—no! “the most excellent Lord and glorious King Naiton” has found—a rectified Easter Calendar!

There is another side to this bright picture. Voices not altogether in unison are heard to mingle with this chorus of national rejoicing. Whence come these discordant sounds? These are the protests of certain recalcitrant members of the Columban clergy who refuse to submit their heads to be shorn after this new and strange fashion. It matters not, we can hear them urge, whether the head be tonsured after this mode or after that, or whether it be tonsured at all. Ours is not a gospel of tonsure one way or other. Columba did not cross the sea and institute his brotherhood at Iona merely to initiate Scotland into the mystery of the tonsure. The truth of our doctrine and the efficacy of our sacraments do not lie in the peculiar tonsure of the man who dispenses them. That were to make Christianity a system of childish mimicry or of wicked jugglery. Nor does the power of the eucharist to edify depend on its being solemnised on a particular day. It is the grand fact of the Resurrection that gives the Christian festival its sublime significance. Tonsure or no tonsure is therefore nothing to us. But it is everything to us to submit our heads to have imprinted upon them the badge of subjection to Rome. That were to renounce the faith of our fathers. It were to arraign and condemn Columba and the elders of Iona as having been in error all along, and guilty of schism in living separate from Rome, and following rebelliously the precepts of Scripture when they ought to have submitted to the councils of the Church. Know therefore, O King, that we will not obey your command nor receive your tonsure.

This was conduct truly faithful and magnanimous. It

shows that the spirit of Columba still lived in the Scottish Church, and that the people of Scotland, instructed by pastors who could intelligently and firmly sacrifice status and emolument at the shrine of truth, had not so far degenerated as the silence of the monkish historians of after days would make us think. There must yet have been no inconsiderable amount of piety and Christian knowledge in Scotland.

But to Nectan these pleadings were addressed in vain. He was so filled with the adulation of Abbot Ceolfrid and the flatteries of the missionaries of Rome that he had no ear to listen to the remonstrances of his own clergy. He could ill brook the slight on his authority which their courageous resolution implied, and was but the more set on carrying out his "reformation." Accordingly, as Bede informs us, "he prayed to have architects sent him to build a church in his nation after the Roman manner, promising to dedicate the same in honour of the blessed Peter, the prince of the Apostles, and that he and all his people would always follow the custom of the Holy Roman Apostolic Church, as far as they could ascertain the same in consequence of their remoteness from the Roman language and nation."<sup>1</sup> He followed this up by immediate steps for completing the revolution in his church and kingdom by sending messengers throughout his dominions to have the Easter tables altered from the cycle of eighty-four to the cycle of nineteen years, and the festival kept in accordance with the new reckoning; and further, the messengers were commanded to see that all the ministers of religion had their heads shorn after the Roman fashion, and if any one refused to conform he was to be told that there was no longer place for him in the dominions of King Nectan. We do not know

<sup>1</sup> Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, Lib. v. c. xxi.



how many, but there is reason to conclude that a very great number of the Columban clergy refused compliance, and had to go into exile. They were hospitably received by their brethren on the Scottish side of Drumalban.

In this occurrence we see the "Scottish Church" in the Pictish dominions passing into bondage. She must submit henceforth to the royal will, and do the royal bidding in the matter of the tonsure and Easter. It is probable that these two things were only the beginnings of the servitude in which the clergy were kept by the Pictish kings. It is of the nature of such bondage to grow. The men who had so far yielded, rather than go into exile with their brethren, would have to yield still farther, and have other burdens imposed upon them. Possibly secular exactions were in time added to their ecclesiastical and spiritual sacrifices and disqualifications. Burdens would be laid on their estates as well as on their consciences. It had been customary to exempt their lands from the imposts and taxes of the State: these immunities they would no longer enjoy. Possibly they were spoiled of their lands altogether. And now for a century and more the Columban clergy had been subject to this servitude in the Pictish dominions.

When we know what the bondage was, we can the better conjecture the kind and extent of the liberty which King Gregory gave the "Scottish Church." In the decree of Nectan we have the "law and custom" of the Pictish monarchy in ecclesiastical affairs. It enjoined, under heavy penalties, the Roman observance. It was this that drove the Columban clergy across Drumalban, and not the secular burdens and imposts which possibly were added afterwards. The latter they could have submitted to with a good conscience, although they might have accounted them unjust and oppressive; but the first, the Roman observance to wit,



touched the conscience, and left them no alternative but to leave their country. Here then, in the revocation of Nectan's edict even, must the liberation of the "Scottish Church" begin. This was the part of the "servitude" that pressed on the soul. Release from the burdens and exactions of a secular kind which may have been laid on their lands, and which would be exigible by the King or the Mormaer, would follow in due course; but first, release must come to the conscience, and that could be given only by revoking Nectan's decree, and leaving the Columbites at liberty to resume the customs of their ancient Church. That this decree was revoked, and the ancient liberty of worship restored to the Columban clergy, we have undoubted proof. Two hundred years afterwards, when the Columban pastors met in conference with Queen Margaret and her bishops, the charge against them was that they practised barbarous rites, and neither in the matter of the tonsure nor the matter of the eucharist did they conform to the laws of Rome. No more satisfactory evidence could we have of the liberty which Gregory gave the Scottish Church, and the use she made of it. It gave her two hundred years more of her ancient discipline and worship.

This tyrannical measure recoiled on Nectan and his kingdom. It created a rupture between the Picts and Scots, which issued in long and bloody wars betwixt the two races. The conversion of the Pictish nations by Columba was followed by an instant sheathing of the sword; and now for a century and a half, hardly had there been battle betwixt Pict and Scot. No mightier proof can we have of the power of Christianity to bind nations in amity and banish war, than that in a country like the Scotland of that day, and between two such nations as the Picts and Scots, there should have been a peace of more than a cen-

tury's duration. Yet such is the fact. The two nations were drawing together, and the union betwixt them would have come without fighting and bloodshed, had not the bigotry of Nectan rekindled the old fires, and made it impossible that the two races should unite till first it had been shown in a series of terrific and bloody contests which of the two was the stronger on the battlefield. Nor is this all. It is probable that Nectan's policy cost the Picts the sovereignty of Scotland. They were the more numerous, and in some respects the more powerful of the two nations : and had the union come by peaceable means, the Picts undoubtedly would have given kings to the throne and their name to the country, but when they forced the matter to the decision of arms, they found that the injustice and cruelty of Nectan to the Columban Church weighed upon their sword and turned its edge in the day of battle. They fought with the valour of their race, they shed their blood in torrents, but they failed to win the kingdom, and their name perished.

King Nectan and his line disappear, but the church of Columba which he had chased out of his dominions comes back to dwell again in the old land. One of the first measures of Kenneth MacAlpin after ascending the throne of the united kingdom was, as we have seen, to recall the Columban clergy and place them in the old ecclesiastical foundations left vacant by the expulsion of their fathers. Another half century passes, and the Columban church obtains another enlargement under King Gregory, and now, after having been plucked up and cast out of the Pictish territory, we see her again taking root and flourishing in the enjoyment of her ancient privileges and liberties. Historians have been little observant of this fact, and certainly little observant of its lesson, but it is full of instruction. It adds another to the many examples in history of the truth of

Beza's saying, not yet uttered, that "the church is an anvil which has worn out many a hammer." Nectan struck with all his force, but when dying in the cowl of a monk he saw doubtless that the blow had effected little, and had he lived longer he would have seen that it had missed the anvil and struck his own throne. These well-authenticated facts make the silence of the monkish chroniclers of the tenth century regarding the condition of the Columban church a matter of less moment. We are independent of their testimony ; for here have we great historic monuments which assure us that the church of Columba had not passed out of existence, as their silence would almost lead one to conclude, but, on the contrary, that it remained rooted in the land as an independent organisation, maintaining divine service according to the simple formula of Columba ; that it lived on into the darkness of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, keeping alive the Christian knowledge of the Scottish people, of whose successive generations it was the instructor, in short, that it was the sheet anchor of the country, staying it in the midst of the furious tempests that burst upon it, now from the mountains of the north, now from the Danes beyond the sea, and now from the Saxons of England.

## CHAPTER IV.

A.D. 878—889.

GREGORY OF SCOTLAND AND ALFRED OF ENGLAND—  
NORSEMEN—THE FADING COLUMBAN LAMP.

WE fail to discover in succeeding Pictish sovereigns that excess of proselytising zeal which turned King Nectan into a persecutor. We read of no second act of bigotry similar to that which disgraced his reign. His successors on the throne could hardly fail to see that Nectan had committed a great error. The proofs of this were but too visible. He had created a great void at the heart of his kingdom. He had weakened the moral power and endangered the civil order of the nation ; he had kindled the flames of war after they had been extinct for a century and a half ; in fine, he had brought revolution on himself, and been fain in the end of his days to seek the shelter of a convent, and after having worn a crown, die in a monk's cowl.

These evil consequences had followed the tyrannical act which the Pictish king, influenced by the flattery of Abbot Ceolfrid, and the persuasions of the Roman missionaries, and impelled moreover by his own fanatical zeal, had been driven to commit. His successors, warned by his example, would learn not to be enamoured of Roman novelties, or open their ear too readily to monkish counsellors. Still, though they saw Nectan's error, they might not be in a



position to rectify it. To revoke the edict and recall those whom it had driven into banishment might not now be in their power. They had a war on their hands with the Scots, which demanded all their attention. While that war lasted it would not be a wise policy to recall the Columban clergy. They were mostly Scotch, and might have difficulty in maintaining the attitude of neutrals during hostilities. They would at least be liable to be suspected of secretly favouring the triumph of the Scotch arms. The correction of Nectan's error must lie over for the present. And hence it was that, although there is no evidence that the Roman innovations meanwhile made much progress beyond the court of Nectan, or found favour with the Pictish people, farther than the royal edict might compel them to an outward uniformity in the Easter celebration, the return of the Columban clergy to the Pictish dominions did not take place till the war between the two races had ended in their union into one nation. The return of the Columbites, as we have seen, was under Kenneth Macalpin: their full restoration to their ancient liberties was half a century later in the reign of King Grig, or Gregory, to whom we now return.

The strong hand of Gregory on the helm, Scotland began again to make headway (883). It had stood still, or gone back, during the troubled but, happily, short reign of the "Swift Foot," whose policy had nothing of the progressive quality with which nature had so largely endowed his limbs. While he sat on the throne the gloom kept thickening above the country, but with the new ruler there came a new dawn. Gregory had opened his reign with a measure of good augury, and not less of wise policy: for it is not necessary to suppose that in relaxing the bonds of the Columban clergy he was actuated solely by

He had respect, no doubt, to the benefit which himself and his nation would reap from this act of justice. If, as is strongly suspected, his title to the throne was doubtful, he did well to make sure that so influential a body as the Columbites should be on his side and in favour of his government.

Having by one and the same act enlarged the liberties of the "Scottish Church," and strengthened his own throne, Gregory addressed himself to the task of correcting the disorders in which the defeat at Crail and the reign of "Swift Foot" had involved the kingdom. A portion of the Pictish nation had brought their loyalty into suspicion. Their behaviour in the late disastrous battle had been equivocal. Their treachery or cowardice was believed to have led to the loss of the day, and the many calamities that followed thereon. Gregory did not choose that so grave a dereliction of duty on so critical an occasion should go without chastisement. Since the battle other circumstances had come to light which tended still farther to strengthen the doubt entertained respecting the thorough devotion of a section of the Picts to the cause of the union. The Danes, on quitting the country after the battle of Crail, left this part of the coast in the possession of the Picts. This looked like keeping open the door for the return of the enemy. Gregory could not permit the keys of his kingdom to be in the hands of men who were disaffected to his Government, and who seemed not unwilling to sacrifice the union between the two races provided they recovered thereby their standing as a separate and independent nation. He drove this body of disaffected Picts out of Fife across the Forth. He pursued them through the Lothians to Berwick, in which they shut themselves up, and where Gregory made them captive, the  
 \* having opened their gates to him.

These successes at home would seem to have tempted the Scottish monarch to venture on exploits outside his own kingdom. Instead of returning within the limits of Alban, which were already considerably overpassed, he led his army farther into Northumbria. These parts were then much infested by the Danes. When repulsed from the coast of Scotland they not unfrequently turned their galleys in the direction of England, and overspreading the northern counties, then almost defenceless, they gathered no end of spoil, and shed very much blood. Gregory doubtless reckoned that if he could clear out these invaders from the northern counties of England the chance was so much the less of having to fight them on the soil of Scotland. As an acknowledgment of the services Gregory had rendered them by ridding them, for the time at least, of these troublesome visitors, the petty sovereigns which then ruled in England, seem to have given him some sort of authority or dominion over the border counties of Northumberland, Cumberland, and Westmoreland, happy to commit their defence against foreign invasion to the sword of Gregory.

The Scottish monarch is described as pursuing his triumphant career further west. We next find him with his army in Strathclyde. The Britons of the Kingdom of Cumbria had offended by appropriating a narrow strip of Scottish territory which lay on the northern banks of the Clyde, and which included that famous rock (Dumbarton) at the foot of which the great apostle of Ireland had passed his youth. The stolen territory was all the more likely to have interest to the man who had "given liberty to the Scottish Church," inasmuch as it was the birthplace of that great Scotsman who had been the founder of the "Scottish Church," first by christianising Ireland, and in the next place by putting the evangelical torch into the hands of Columba that he might



carry it across and light with its sacred flame the dark land of Caledonia. Having rescued this hallowed spot, for such doubtless it was to Gregory, and having chastised the Britons for appropriating it, it was given back to Scotland.

Not yet had Gregory finished his victorious course, if we are to believe his Scotch chroniclers. He next crossed to Ireland, where he is said to have waged a campaign with great glory, quelling an insurrection which had broken out against the King of Dublin, an ally of Gregory's, and restoring him to his throne. It must be added, however, that the record of these wars is somewhat dubious, and we despatch them with brevity. The English and Irish chroniclers are silent respecting them. We hear of them only from Fordun and other Scotch historians. That, however, is no sufficient reason for regarding them as altogether apocryphal. The "Registry of the Priory of St Andrews" says expressly "that Gregory conquered Ireland and the greater part of England,"<sup>1</sup> by which we understand it to be meant that his conquests in these two countries were extensive, and had a decisive effect on the governments of both kingdoms. Those who maintain that these campaigns were never waged, and that their record is illusory, defend their allegation by saying that Gregory was a munificent patron of the church, and that the monks of St Andrews, to show their gratitude, carved out this brilliant career for the Scottish king, and exalted him to the rank of a hero. But it does not appear that Gregory surpassed other Scotch kings of his age in the gifts he bestowed on churchmen, his one well-known act of grace excepted. Besides, the benefactions of Gregory were bestowed in the end of the ninth century, whereas his apotheosis as a great warrior, which it is

<sup>1</sup> "Hic subjugavit sibi Hyberniam totam et fere Angliam."—*Innes' Critical Essay*, pp. 801, 802.

insinuated was done in recompence of his liberality to the church, did not take place till the middle of the thirteenth century, the Registry of St Andrews having been written in 1251. It is truly refreshing to find the gratitude of the monks remaining fresh and green after four centuries. Seldom is it found that the sense of obligation to benefactors is so deep and lasting on the part of corporate bodies whether lay or cleric, as to call forth warm expressions of thanks centuries after the authors of these good gifts have exchanged their thrones for their stone coffins. Long before this wreath was placed on his tomb by the monks of St Andrews, Gregory was nothing more than a handful of ashes.

In that age it was difficult to keep England and Scotland apart, so as that their affairs should not intermingle. The same terrible people from beyond the sea were the enemies of both, and made their hostile descent now on the coast of the one country and now on the coast of the other. This drew England and Scotland together, and helped to maintain the peace betwixt them. If so be the Danish hordes were driven back, and their galleys chased off the coast, it mattered little whether the feat had been achieved by Scotch or by English valour, since both countries shared in nearly equal measure in the benefits of the victory. So did it happen in this instance. Gregory on arriving in Northumbria, whither his pursuit of the fleeing Picts had led him, found the Danes, under their leader Hardnute, laying waste the country and slaughtering the inhabitants. The England of that day was miserably distracted and torn. The Danes were inflicting upon the Saxons all the horrors which the Saxons had inflicted on the Britons at a former epoch. The throne of Wessex was filled by one of the bravest and wisest princes of his age, nevertheless a great part of th



Alfred was passed on the battlefield to prevent his dominions being overrun and devastated by these northern marauders. Occupied with these greater cares, the remote Northumbria was left largely to take care of itself. It was here that the barbarian leader and his merciless followers were now ravaging. Although he found them on English soil, Gregory not the less recognised in Hardnute and his warriors the enemies of his own country, and gladly seized the opportunity now offered him of avenging upon them in Northumbria the injuries they had inflicted upon his nation in Fife. If a brother sovereign should be the first to reap advantage from the success of his arms, this consideration, so far from making the Scottish king hold back, made him only the more eager to effect the expulsion of the Danes. Gregory inflicted such a slaughter upon them that it broke their power in the north of England, and delivered the petty sovereigns that then ruled in that land, as well as the great prince of Wessex, from their terror. The bonds of amity betwixt the two nations and their rulers were strengthened by this interchange of friendly acts. The bloody fields of the borderland were effaced from the memories of men by the bloodier fields of the Dane. Northumberland was placed under the suzerainty, if not the formal sovereignty, of the man whose sword had redeemed it from the spoiler. Alfred appears to have felt no alarm at the nearer approach of the Scottish border to his own dominions. What stronger defence could he have on his northern frontier than the arms of Gregory? He rightly judged, doubtless, that ruled by him Northumbria would be a protecting wall to himself against the tempests from the German Sea. And as regards the Anglo-Saxons now professedly Christian, how much more preferable, as allies and neighbours, were the



Scots to the Danes, in whom the wolfish instincts of paganism were yet unbroken and rampant. The Saxons of the north of England, says Fordun, "thought it better willingly to submit to the Catholic Scots, though enemies, than unwillingly to the Pagan infidels."

In the dark sky of the ninth century there is seen a star of pure and brilliant radiance, on which we love to fix our eyes. We cannot come within the proximity of its orbit without pausing to admire and speak of it. In no age would a creation so lovely have failed to attract and fascinate our gaze, but shining out amid the clouds and tempests of this age, we hail it with wonder and delight. Alfred, Prince of Wessex, exhibited the rare union of the scholar, the legislator, the warrior, and the patriot. To these he would have added, had his days been longer, the Christian reformer. Such, indeed, he was, but only in limited measure, for hardly had he begun to develop his enlightened plans for the reformation of his realm when the grave closed over him, and with Alfred went down into the tomb the hopes of England for four centuries. Till the days of Wyckliffe there came no second dawn to Christendom.

Few princes—not one in an hundred—have had the inestimable privilege of the same training and discipline through which Alfred passed. The range of his education extended far beyond the science and philosophy of his day. His instruction in the liberal arts was not overlooked: not only was he a patron of men of letters, he himself cultivated letters, and the success with which he did so is seen in his translation of the Pastoral of Gregory I. and Bede's Ecclesiastical History. But to these accomplishments Alfred added a higher wisdom than that of the schools. His great qualities were rooted in a piety which was drawn from

Sacred Writings, rather than from the precepts and traditions of churchmen. Moreover, Adversity had taken him to school, and for some terrible years that stern instructress made him give good heed to her lessons. At one time the Danes had well nigh wrested his kingdom from him. He was obliged to flee in disguise and hire himself out as a cowherd. In the quiet of the woods and fields thoughts would arise which had not come into his mind amid courts and armies. When he recovered his throne and had rest from war, these thoughts bore fruit. He gave himself to the work of establishing order, promoting industry, cultivating commerce, and extending the maritime powers of England. His son and grandson, Edward and Athelstan, followed in their father's steps, and these three princes were among the first to show the world that the road to fame is open to the man of peace not less than to the man of the sword. In the successful voyages of Other and Ulfstan into the then unknown northern seas, the English nation under Alfred early displayed their natural bent, and gave prognostication of what they were destined to accomplish in the field of discovery in after ages.<sup>1</sup>

But these were not the highest of the labours of Alfred. He panted above all things to effect a religious reform of his realm. What instrumentality did Alfred employ for effecting his grand purpose? Did he send to Rome for instructors? Did he multiply his "celebrations"? A dogma, till then unheard of, was just beginning to be broached by Paschasius Radbertus in France, that in the eucharist the communicant receives the literal flesh and blood of Christ for his eternal life. Shall Alfred illuminate his realm with this new gospel? What England needed was not more mystery, but more light. The dark-

<sup>1</sup> John Von Muller, *Universal History*, vol. II. p. 134. Lond., 1818.

ness was thick enough already, and there was no need to turn twilight into midnight by promulgating the Cimmerian dogma of transubstantiation.

Alfred took up his position on ground which no churchman of his century had courage to occupy. Turning away from priest and sacrament he went to the Word of God. He conceived the great idea of translating the Scriptures into the vernacular of the Saxon people. He assembled a select body of learned men at his court, and set them to the work of translating the Bible: he put his own hand to the work, so much was his heart set upon it, and, like Columba, he was engaged in translating the Psalms at the time of his death.<sup>1</sup>

Alfred stands at the head of the noble army of Bible translators. It is a higher glory than his fifty battles by land and sea. The work in which he led the way can know no termination till the Word of Life has been translated into the tongue of every people on earth, and its light has shone round and round the globe.

It would be interesting to know the personal relations that subsisted betwixt Gregory and Alfred. If the character of the first approximated the portrait which the Scottish chroniclers have left of him, these two princes must have been drawn to one another by a warmer sentiment than mere conventional friendship. Both, we are permitted to believe, were magnanimous, princely, and patriotic; and it is interesting to see two such men occupying contemporaneously the thrones of Scotland and England. Alfred was surrounded by men who loved and admired him, and who have painted him in colours that remain fresh to this day. We are sure we see the true likeness of the great

<sup>1</sup> Wilkins (*Concilia*, i. p. 186, *et seq.*) has given us a specimen of Alfred's labours in a portion of the law of God translated by him.



English prince of the ninth century. His Scottish contemporary enjoyed no such advantage, and we are not certain that we have the real features of Gregory. But it corroborates what has been transmitted to us concerning him to know that, like Alfred, he aimed at effecting a religious reform, more or less extensive. For no other interpretation can we put upon the statement that Gregory gave freedom to the Scottish Church which till his time had been kept in bondage among the Picts.

During the century and a half going before, great deadness, doubtless, overspread the east and north of Scotland, the ancient territory of the Picts. The Columban Church in those parts had been all but rooted out. The Sabbath services in many places had ceased; and where they were still continued it was with great inefficiency and coldness by the poor substitutes which had been found for the expelled Columbitcs; men from the north of England, where the influence of Rome was now dominant, or monks from the houses of Adamnan foundation, in which, as in the case of Adamnan himself, the spirit of the Roman Egbert was struggling with the spirit of Columba for the mastery. The schools had been closed, and the instruction of the youth was neglected. There is no evidence to show that the Roman ideas and customs had infected the people to any great extent. It was religious apathy and Pictish coercion, rather than Papal propagandism that weighed upon the land. In the old days when Columba directed the evangelisation of Scotland from Iona, no royal will circumscribed his plans or fettered the steps of the missionaries he sent forth. The land was before them, and they might go whither they would and kindle their light at all the great centres. They did so, and in a generation or two the country was dotted with evangelical beacon-fires, and the Aryan darkness of the Druid was dis-

pelled. This was a freedom of action which had been unknown to the Columban Church in Pictland for a century and a half. The consequence was that, denied the liberty of evangelistic enterprise, the inclination to enter upon it departed. The Columban Church in Pictland lay down and sunk into slumber, leaving her lamp untrimmed, and the region around immersed in spiritual gloom. With her release from thralldom there came, doubtless, to the church in Pictland, and, perhaps, also in the ancient territory of the Scots, a re-awakening of zeal and a revival of the light. That light, it is true, burned less brightly now than when it was first kindled on Iona, four centuries before. But the old lamp was not to be permitted to go out. The appearance of the Roman tonsure on the heads of certain of the Columbite clergy gave emphatic warning that years, and it might be centuries, of darkness were yet in store for Scotland. In presence of these gathering shades, what could the friends of the gospel do, except watch around their lamp and feed its flame, and if they could not bring back its pristine brightness, they could keep it alive, till the night had numbered its watches, and the hour had struck for that great dawn to appear for which the world was waiting.

## CHAPTER V.

A.D. 889—942.

### DONALD—CONSTANTIN—LOST BATTLES AND THEIR LESSONS.

THE royal vaults at Iona had received another tenant,<sup>1</sup> and Donald, the third of that name, the son of Constantin II., now filled the throne (A.D. 889). The keen eye of Gregory had not failed to mark the virtues of the youth, and on his death-bed, it is said, he recommended him to his nobles as his fittest successor. "Nor did he deceive," says Buchanan, "the judgment of that wise king."<sup>2</sup> No long time elapsed till occasion presented itself for testing the capabilities of the new sovereign. Across the German Sea had sped the tidings that Gregory was dead, and in a brief space the black galleys of the Norsemen were again seen ploughing the waves, their dragon-headed prows turned in the direction of England.

They arrived off the coast of Northumbria, and for some days they remained inactive, as if uncertain whether to swoop down upon the northern or upon the southern half of the island. Alfred, who was still alive, fearing that the tempest now hanging on the Northumbrian coast might finally burst upon his own dominions, made advances to

<sup>1</sup> "In pace diem clausit extremam," says John Major of Gregory, "et in insula Iona sepultus."—*Hist. Britan.*, Lib. iii. cap. 2, p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> Buchanan, *Hist.*, Lib. vi. c. 14.



Donald of Scotland. He reminded the Scottish king of the alliance which had subsisted betwixt the two kingdoms in his predecessor's time, and which had been fruitful in benefits to both countries, and proposed that the old friendship should be continued, and that each should assist the other, as occasion required, against the enemies which the sea was continually sending forth against both. These overtures were cordially met by King Donald. An armed force was sent to the help of Alfred of England, and there followed a bloody battle with the common enemy, in which the bulk of the Danish invaders were slaughtered. The remnant that survived the carnage having, it would seem, but little heart to go back to their own country, were permitted to settle in Northumbria, on condition of their embracing the Christian faith. These worshippers of Odin accepted without scruple the easy stipulation; but their conversion brought neither honour to their new religion, nor in the end safety to the country in which it opened to them a settlement.

Scarcely had this cloud passed away till another arose in the opposite quarter which tested still more severely the spirit of the Scottish king. The clans of Moray and Ross had fallen out and were fighting with one another. It were vain to seek for the cause of quarrel, for it needed but little to kindle at any moment the flames of internecine war on this region of normal disturbance. What added to the gravity of the affair was the circumstance that a body of Danes, lured by the scent of plunder, had joined the fray, and were increasing the effusion of blood which already exceeded what would have been spilt in a pitched battle. On receiving the tidings that his chieftains were quarrelling, Donald turned his face towards the north and marched right into the heart of the tempest. He met the insurgent host,—a ravaging horde of stranger Danes, mutinous Picts, and

rebellious chieftains, and he defeated them in two successive battles, the one fought at Cullen, and the other in the neighbourhood of Forres. The well-known stone in the latter locality, which has engaged the attention of the curious for centuries, but which no one has yet indubitably deciphered, is not unnaturally conjectured to be in some sort the memorial of these events, and to mark, it may be, the grave of King Donald. His death is variously recorded, but the preponderance of opinion is that he died at Forres,<sup>1</sup> having fallen in the battle, or sunk under the fatigues consequent on the campaign. So says Fordun. Boece, on the other hand, prolongs his life, and makes him visit Northumbria to see how it fared with the Danish colony planted there, and whether those worshippers of Odin, who had been so summarily transformed on the battlefield into the professors of the Christian faith, were conducting themselves as became loyal subjects and good Christians. The old historian John Major hints his concurrence with Boece.<sup>2</sup> All agree, however, that King Donald breathed his last in the eleventh year of his reign. His career was brief but full of stirring events, and now that it was over he was borne amid the grief of his nation to rest in the solemn quiet of Iona.

Donald was succeeded by Constantin (A.D. 900), the son of Swift Foot. During the reign of the man whom we now see mounting the throne the shadow on the dial of Scotland was destined to go back several degrees. His wavering faith and unsteady friendships wrought greater

<sup>1</sup> "Oppidum Fother occisum est a gentibus."—*Chronicon Pictorum*. Pinkerton's *Enquiry*, vol. i. p. 495. By the "Fother" here Chalmers (*Caledonia*, i. 384) believes Forteviot to be meant, and that the words intimate its destruction by the Danes. But "occisum" is not the word usually employed to denote the destruction of a town, but the slaughter of a man. Innes, Pinkerton, and others agree in thinking that Forres is here meant, and that Donald was there slain. Skene says Dunotter.

<sup>2</sup> *Historia Britannia*, Lib. iii. c. 2, p. 91.



vexations to himself, and brought greater calamities upon his country, than if he had been a bad and not simply a weak prince.

The Scottish reigns of that day were short. The throne was beset by too many enemies to permit any long interval of time to part the "Fatayle Chayre" at Scone from the royal sepulchres of Iona. War, or foreign invasion, or domestic treason were never far from the royal seat, and its occupant was given but few years to possess it, and these full of anxiety, and darkened by the shadow of the all but certainty of a tragic end. But King Constantin was an exception. His reign was prolonged for forty years, and when at last he came to die, he expired on the bed of peace. His reign, as we have hinted, wore a sombre complexion, yet its mistakes and reverses are redeemed by an event that sheds a halo round the man, and gives a singular interest to his epoch. That event was the convocation, in the sixth year of his reign, of a national Assembly at Scone for the reformation of the Scottish Church. Our curiosity and interest are intensely awakened by the unexpected occurrence of a reforming Assembly in the tenth century of Scotland. What, we naturally ask, were the subjects discussed, and what the practical resolutions adopted? But instead of full information on these points, we are baulked and mortified by receiving only a few meagre details.

Neither the ancient chroniclers nor the modern historians have appreciated the significance of this convention. They dismiss it in six lines : and yet it clearly indicates a rallying of the Columban forces, all the more remarkable that it takes place in what we have been accustomed to regard as one of the deadest periods of Scottish history. What further adds to its significance is the fact that this convention at Scone is one in a chain of events, all of which point



in the same direction, even the continued corporate existence of the Scottish Church, and its systematic progressive action. First comes the restoration of the Columban clergy to the east and north of Scotland by Kenneth MacAlpin. Next they have their ecclesiastical status and freedom restored to them by King Gregory, and now the Scottish Church, east and west, united in one, and her liberty of action given back, assembles under Constantin to reform herself according to her ancient laws and the Word of God. Looking at it in this light, the convocation records its own history, and refuses to be wiped out from the nation's annals, despite that chronicler and historian have virtually ignored it, and all but consigned it to oblivion. Waiving this matter for the present, we shall devote the following chapter to the special consideration of this convention.

Before entering on the political and military events of the reign of Constantin, we must pause here to sketch the civil divisions and arrangements of Scotland which were made about this time. First of all it behoves our readers to bear in mind that the Kingdom of Scotia has not yet made its appearance. The Scots and Picts are there, fusing their blood into one nation, and uniting their fealty before one throne, but the territory they occupy is still known as the Kingdom of Alban. What is the extent of the Kingdom of Alban, and where are its boundaries placed? Alban is bounded on the south by the Firth of Forth, and on the north by the Spey. So small was the area, and so restricted the limits of Alban at the opening of the tenth century. Both north and south of the Kingdom of Alban was a broad margin of territory over which the tides of war were incessantly flowing and ebbing. The fealty of the inhabitants of these districts was regulated by

the turnings and shiftings of battle. On the south of the Forth was Saxonia ; and when victory inclined to the Scots the men of the Lothians and the Merse recognised their ruler in the occupant of the royal palace at Scone, and did his bidding ; but when the Anglo-Saxons proved the stronger, they carried the tribute of their homage across the Tweed to lay it at the feet of the Northumbrian monarch.

It was much the same in the counties on the north of the Spey. The Kings of Norway, having subjected the Orkneys, pushed their conquests southward into Caithness and Sutherland, and onward to the fertile region which is watered by the Findhorn and the Spey. But their dominion over these parts was precarious and transitory, and was always challenged by the Kings of Alban. The Albanic monarchs claimed to be the lords superior of these counties, and the Norwegian Jarls, whom the Kings of Norway appointed to govern them in their name, had frequently to pay verbal homage, and at times more substantial tribute to the Scottish Kings. While these outlying regions north and south of Alban were in this transition state, neither included in Scotland, nor yet wholly excluded from it, the condition of the inhabitants was far from enviable. Their territory was the battlefield of contending Kings, and they were continually familiar with war in its most barbarous forms. They escaped from the yoke of one master only to fall under that of another, and after a brief space to return into bondage to their former tyrant. So passed their lives ; much reason had they to wish that the time would come when their absorption into the Kingdom of Alban would bring them rest. That time was now near.

It remains that we indicate the civil divisions of the Kingdom of Alban. As stated above, this little kingdom, soon to grow into the greater Scotland, v



included within the modest limits of the Forth and the Spey. It was divided into five regions. On the west was the province of Fortrenn. It consisted of the modern districts of Menteith and Strathearn, and its population, mainly Pictish, was spoken of as the men of Fortrenn. The second region, lying next on the east, consisted of the territory embraced by the Forth and the Tay, Fife and Fotherif. To this was attached the Carse of Gowrie. The inhabitants of this province were eminently the Scoti of Alban. This was the nucleus or heart of the kingdom, and here, at Scone, was placed the royal palace of the Scottish Kings. The third province, beginning at Hilef, extended to the Dee and the German Ocean. It included Angus and Mearns; the districts known in our day as the shires of Forfar and Kincardine. There is some doubt as regards the position of Hilef, the starting point on the west of the third province. It is probably Lyff, on the north bank of the Tay, and the present boundary between the counties of Perth and Forfar. The inhabitants were called the Men of Moerne, and had as their stronghold the Castle of Dun Fother or Dunotter. The fourth region stretched northward from the Dee to the River Spey, and included the modern counties of Aberdeen and Banff. The fifth province extended from the Spey to the mountains of Drumalban, including the present Breadalbane and Athol.

These were the five regions that constituted the body of the kingdom; but we have said the boundaries of Alban were not fixed and immoveable. A successful raid or victorious battle would at times enlarge them beyond their normal lines. When this happened on the north, the county of Moray formed a sixth province, and the ancient Dalriada, lying along the western sea-board, formed a



These five regions were subdivided into smaller sections, each under its respective ruler. In this division the unit was the Tuath, or tribe. When several Tuaths were combined, it became a Tuath-Mor, or great tribe. When two Tuaths-Mor were united, it constituted a Coicidh, or Province. At the head of the Tuath was the Toisech. At the head of the Tuath-Mor was the Mor-maer. At the point where the four southern provinces met, was the seat of the capital and the palace of the king. That point was Scone.<sup>1</sup>

We return to Constantin, whom we now find filling the throne. His misfortunes began with the colony of Odin worshippers which had been so unwisely planted in Northumbria, in the belief that the mystic but mighty rite of baptism had extinguished in them all the vices of paganism and replenished them with the virtues of Christianity. This body of Danes, who had come back unchanged from the baptismal font, parted like a wedge the dominions of the Scottish and the English kings, and were a thorn in the side of both monarchs. Their position gave them an importance far beyond their numbers, and their alliance being sought now by the one and now by the other, they were able to turn the scale in the frequent contests waged at this time betwixt England and Scotland. The great Alfred was now in his grave, and his son Edward, known as Edward the Confessor, occupied his throne. The two predecessors of Constantin, Gregory and Donald, had remained the incorruptible friends of Alfred and his Christian subjects of England, despite all the seductions and promises of the Danes. Not so Constantin III. Departing from the lofty

<sup>1</sup> "Such is the account given by Dr Skene in his *Celtic Scotland* (I. 340 *et seq.*), mainly on the authority of Andrew, Bishop of Caithness, a Scotsman by birth, and a Monk of Dunfermline. Bishop in 1130, and died in 1184."

policy of his predecessors, and deluded by the vain hope of enlarging his dominions on the south, he formed a league with the Danes, and set out in company of his new allies to attack the English, and win new territories over which to sway his sceptre. But his cause did not prosper.

When the two armies appeared on the field, the English host was found to be much smaller than the Scotch, but stratagem supplied the place of numbers. Hardly had battle been joined when the English made a feint of retreating. The confederate Scotch and Danish host, thinking that they had not to fight but only pursue, broke their ranks, and with headlong ardour followed the fleeing enemy. Suddenly the aspect of the battle was seen to change. The foe, which the Scotch believed to be routed, rallied at a preconcerted signal, and, turning on their pursuers, hewed down their scattered groups, and continued the merciless slaughter till hardly one of the northern army was left to carry tidings to their countrymen of what had befallen them on this bloody field.

Soon after these events Edward, the English monarch, went to his grave, and his son, the warlike Athelstan, ascended his throne. A full decade passes away during which it is impossible to see what is transacting in Scotland. When the veil is lifted disaster has again returned, and a deeper gloom is brooding over the little kingdom than the former reverse of its arms had brought with it. The Scottish king, forgetful of his former error, and heedless of the lesson its bloody chastisement was meant to teach him, has re-entered the same ill-omened path, and is contracting alliance with the enemies of his nation and religion. The suspicions that clung to Athelstan touching his father's death, led to conspiracies against him among his own sub-  
the Northumbrian Danes, seeing in his perplexities

their own opportunity, marched southward and seized upon the city of York. The Scots permitted themselves to be drawn into the quarrel. The illusion of a kingdom on the south of the Tweed, fairer and more fertile, if not so large, as the great mountains and broad straths over which Constantin reigned in the north, had resumed its fascination over the king's mind, and blinded him to the essential injustice and great risks of his crooked policy. This time the omens were favourable. The Scoto-Danish army was reinforced by the Welsh, the Danes of Dublin, and the Britons of Strathclyde. Each nationality had its own particular cause of quarrel with Athelstan, and if only this vast confederacy can be brought into the field and kept together till they have struck a blow at the power of the English king, there can be little doubt of the issue. The Scots this time will carry back not the doleful news of a crushing defeat, but the welcome tidings of a glorious victory.

A great tempest was rolling up on all sides against Athelstan, who meanwhile was making vigorous preparations to meet it, and direct its destructive fury past himself and his subjects. The Scottish army was transported by sea, and landed at the mouth of the Humber. They marched into the interior of the country to meet their allies, and deliver their meditated blow with united and decisive force. They sighted the encampments of their confederates, as they believed, but no friendly shout welcomed their coming. The Scots halted, for the ominous silence told them that it was the camp of Athelstan to which they were drawing nigh. The Welsh and other confederates had not yet arrived. The promptitude of Athelstan had anticipated the junction of the allies. He struck at once, and with vigour.

A gleam of romance heralded the dark tragedy that followed. So says the legend. Along with



Anlaf, a son of Godfrey, king of the Danes of Dublin, and a relative of King Constantin. Anlaf knew, like most of his countrymen, how to handle the harp. The thought struck him that his gift of music might be turned to account in the cause of his royal relative. He had read of an adventure not unlike what he was now meditating, successfully carried out by the great Alfred. Disguising himself as a minstrel, he appeared at the gates of the English camp, and was instantly admitted. Anlaf touched his harp, and to the music of its strings added the yet sweeter music of his voice. Even in monarch's hall the well-played strains would have brought praise to their author, but heard on the battlefield, where they naturally suggested with the force of contrast the rougher sounds by which they were so soon to be succeeded and drowned, they entranced the English soldiers. The musician was left to range at will through the camp. He was brought before the English king, that he might display in the royal presence the marvellous melody of his harp when touched by the skilful hand of its owner. Athelstan was delighted with his music, and dismissed him with a reward. The musician was not so carried away by the triumph of his art as to forget his object in coming hither. He carefully noted the disposition of the English army, and in particular the position of the royal tent, so as to be able to lead in a nocturnal assault upon it.

It so happened, however, that a soldier who had formerly served in the Irish army, and was now with the English, recognised Anlaf under his disguise, and communicated to the king his suspicions that the minstrel, whose performance had so delighted the army, was a spy. The king, profiting by the hint, made a priest occupy his tent for the night,

himself sleeping in the priest's bed. The night assault came off, Anlaf leading in it. The priest was slain, and the king lived to lead in the battle of the morrow.

That morrow brought with it emphatic intimation to the Scottish king that his dream of conquering a kingdom in England was not to be realised. Still the omens continued to be favourable. The dawn witnessed the arrival on the field of action of the looked for Danish reinforcements. To these were added some Cumbrian Britons, making the Scottish army superior in respect of numbers to the English host. Athelstan, knowing that delay would only lessen the hopes of victory by increasing the number of his enemies, immediately joined battle. The action was fought near the Humber, at a place which Fordun calls Brounyngfeld, most probably the modern Brumby (A.D. 937). Athelstan, at the head of his troops, rushed sword in hand into the midst of the Scottish entrenchments. Both sides fought with desperation. Locked in deadly grapple with each other they contended on ground which was every moment becoming more slippery with the blood, and more cumbered with the bodies of the fallen. The Londoners and Mercians, the flower of the English army, threw themselves upon the Scots. The latter, for some time, bravely sustained their onset, but at last they were compelled to give way. With them went the fortunes of the day ; for though the slaughter was prolonged, it was not for victory but for vengeance. It was with difficulty that the Scottish king made his escape alive from the field, but it must have sadly embittered the pleasure arising from his own safety to reflect that he had left behind him the bulk of the Scottish army, including the flower of his nobility, to be buried by the English, or devoured by the birds of prey which in those days gathered in flocks to



feast at such banquets as that which was now spread for them on the banks of the Humber.<sup>1</sup>

On both sides the loss was great. Speaking of the Scots army, Fordun says that "the slain were innumerable." He specifies, moreover, three princes and nine generals as having fallen. The English chroniclers magnify still more the carnage, and call the battle of Brunanburgh the bloodiest ever fought in Britain. Of course they could compare it only with battles which had happened before their day, and which had been stricken on a very limited territory. The "Britain" of their day, we need not remind our readers, did not mean the far spreading empire which the name calls up to our minds; it did not even include the northern hills, and the southern plains which the "four seas" of our insular home enclose; the "Britain" of the English chroniclers of that time lay within the two walls of Hadrian and Severus. It had Anglo-land on the south, and Alban, now beginning to be called Scotia, on the north, and was

<sup>1</sup> It is impossible to arrive at certainty regarding the events which happened under Constantin of Scotland and Athelstan of England. And in particular it is impossible to say what exactly were the causes which gave rise to the war that ended in this great battle. According to some it was the desire of Constantin to aggrandise his kingdom; according to others, it grew out of the ambition of Athelstan to extend his territory to the Forth. We may perhaps be permitted to divide the blame betwixt the two. All the chroniclers, Scotch, English, and Irish, have written of the battle of Brunanburgh, but their narratives are a tangled web. Dr W. F. Skene has brought vast Celtic scholarship and laborious research to the elucidation of this, as well as of many other points in Scottish history. See *Celtic Scotland*, i. 351-359. He says, "Aldbrough unites almost all the conditions required for the battle of Brunanburgh. . . . About a quarter of a mile to the west of Boroughbridge are three large monoliths, varying from eighteen to twenty-three feet high. They are now called the Devil's Arrows; and east of Aldbrough, at a place called Dunsforth, was a tumulus called the Devil's Cross. It was broken into many years ago for road materials, and in it were found human remains. The Devil's Cross and the Devil's Arrows may be memorials of the battle." Vol. i. 359.



restricted to the strip of territory lying between the Tyne, or at the utmost the Humber, and the Forth. Still in judging of the rank assigned to this battle by the English historians, we must bear in mind that the district where it was fought was conspicuously a region of battles. Such had been its history from the days of the Romans downwards, and its evil destiny still clung to it; and of all the bloody conflicts waged upon it, the last we are told was the bloodiest.

The humiliation which had befallen the Scottish monarch, and the reverse which had been sustained by the Scottish arms, had in it a great lesson to the nation, though we greatly doubt if that lesson was understood at the time or seriously laid to heart. It emphatically taught the Scots that their allotted portion of earth was the mountains of the north. It taught them that where shone the lamp of Iona there were their tents to be spread, and it effectually rebuked that ambition which impelled them to seek an enlarged territorial domain at the sacrifice of interests of infinitely higher importance than a great Scottish Kingdom. It would have been a great misfortune to the world, and to the Scots themselves not less, if they had conquered England and placed Constantin on the throne of both countries. If they had come to mingle with the Saxon race their peculiar fervour and fire would have been extinguished. Their energies would have been relaxed and their strength abated if, instead of being concentrated in their own little country, against the narrow boundary of which we so often find them chafing, they had been permitted to overflow into the wider spaces of Great Britain. In a word, they would have been lost as the Scottish nation to Christendom, and the Scotie element so intense and so vitalising might have disappeared from the forces of the world. The Scots were a

reserve force for the ages to come. How much their national individuality would have been missed at certain great epochs of the future, the record of the long past can alone enable us to judge. The Scots were taught by these disasters to eschew the path of foreign war, and seek conquests on other fields and with other weapons than those with which they had contended so fatally for themselves on the field of Brunanburg.

After this terrible battle the Scottish king made haste to go back to his own country, but Athelstan, like an avenging Nemesis, trode close behind him. The darkness as of a thunder cloud fell upon the land as he pursued his way northward, and the allies, discomfited and dispirited, were fain to propitiate the conqueror by yielding a ready submission to whatever chastisement he chose to mete out to them. Athelstan tightened his yoke on those ceaseless plotters, the Northumbrian Danes. He stript Constantin of the provinces of Cumberland and Westmoreland,<sup>1</sup> which, when attached to the Scottish crown, were commonly governed by a prince of the blood, the heir presumptive, like our Prince of Wales at the present day. Crossing the Tweed, Athelstan traversed the Merse, broke into the Lothians, marking his steps through the terrified country with devastation, and finally rolled back the Scottish frontier once more to the banks of the Forth. Such ending had this expedition which had begun amid so many auguries of success, was supported by the arms of a multitude of confederates, and which had promised a rich spoil to all concerned in it, and to Constantin a new kingdom stretch-

<sup>1</sup> "Unde iste Constantinus grandi cum exercitu Angliam ingreditur, et in prelio victus Coimbris terras quas a diebus Gregorii 54 annis Scoti tenebant, turpiter amissit."—*Historia*, Johannis Major, Lib. iii. cap. ii. p. 92.

ing southward to the meadows of the Humber, if not to the richer banks of the Thames.

By this time the chair of Columba had ceased to be astricted to the island in which it was originally set up. It had become a moveable seat. The kings of Scotland had already transported it from Iona to Dunkeld, from Dunkeld to Abernethy, from Abernethy to St Andrews, where it now stood. With every removal of the Scottish capital came another transportation of that chair. It gave sanction to the Scottish power; it was the prop of the throne, and therefore never far from the seat of royalty. If Constantin had succeeded in extending his kingdom so as to include the great capitals of York and London, the chair of Columba, following the established custom of the Scottish kings, would have been set up first at York and finally at London. But how long would the lamp of Iona have burned at either place? That lamp had not now the vigour of its early days: it had waxed dim. Moreover, the air of England had become mephitic and murky by reason of the fast gathering shades of Romanism in the southern kingdom. The light of the Scottish lamp would have gone out in the unfriendly air, and the extinction of Scottish Christianity would have been speedily followed by the death of the Scottish genius.

Constantin's first care after his arrival in his own country was to convoke his nobles and take counsel with them on the position of affairs. He assembled them at the old Pictish capital of Abernethy. Many words were not needed to depict the deplorable condition into which his ill-fated expedition had brought the kingdom. It was not one but a multitude of calamities that were weighing upon it. The King indeed had returned safe, but with him had not returned that numerous and high-spirited



England. Its strength and valour lay rotting on the gory field of Brunanburg. The many vacant places in the circle around the King gave mournful proof that of the nobles who had accompanied him to the war a few only now lived. Scotland was not nearly so large as it had been a few short months before. Its boundaries had suddenly shrunk to the shores of Fife, and the sway of Athelstan had reached at a bound the banks of the Forth. The reign of Constantin had now been prolonged for thirty-five inglorious years. The task of governing was becoming too heavy for him, and he was anxious to lay down the sceptre. His subjects, we may well believe, were not unwilling that the burden should be transferred to stronger shoulders, and another chance given the little, valorous, but of late ill-governed country of gathering up its energies, and of vindicating for itself its rightful position and influence among the nations of Europe.

The conference at Abernethy ended in the abdication of Constantin. When he laid down the crown and assumed the "cowl,"—using the phrase in a loose sense, for monkery, in the modern meaning of the word, had not yet been introduced into Scotland,—the monarch selected as his retreat the Monastery of Kilrimont (St Andrews), where he might pass the evening of his life in the society of the Culdees,—"retiring," says Buchanan,—"as to a safe haven, and passed the remaining five years of his life in their society." He died in the fortieth year from his accession to the throne, and in A.D. 943. We take leave of Constantin at the gate of his monastery. As he passes from our view we may be permitted to drop an expression of sympathy

<sup>1</sup> Buchan. *Hist.*, Lib. vi. c. 17. — *Et in senectute descriptus baculum cepit et Iamnis curvabit.* — *Chronica Peritorum.* — *Et: Emissu regno successit, Duo in habitis religionis sines factus Kelsbourgh S. Andrew & successit et ad monachos cum et sepultus.* — *Et: Episcopi Peritorum S.*

with him amid the many misfortunes which have bowed him down. Subject to illusions, mistaking the path of ambition for the path of honour, in a word, a weak rather than a flagitious ruler, we see him not ungracefully closing a reign, clouded with many calamities, by acknowledging, if he could not repair, the errors into which he had fallen. St Berchan touchingly describes his latter end: "Afterwards God did call him to the monastery on the brink of the waves. In the house of the Apostle he came to death: undefiled was the pilgrim." He came not into the sepulchres of his fathers ! The same spot which had given Constantin a shelter for his age, gave him a grave for his ashes.

## CHAPTER VI.

A.D. 906.

### SPECIAL MISSION OF SCOTLAND—SYNOD OF SCONE—A TENTH CENTURY REFORMATION.

GOING aside from the noise of battles, let us withdraw for a brief space into a region where quieter forces are at work. Although quieter it by no means follows that the forces in the presence of which we now find ourselves are weaker. On the contrary, they possess a strength unknown to those agencies which in the midst of tumult and uproar overturn the throne of kings and dissolve the fabric of empires. It is the silent influences that accomplish the mightiest results. The turbulent activities dwell on the surface, the still powers descend into the depths, and working there unheard make their presence known and their power felt only when they have prepared the way for some tremendous revolution, or brought to the birth some epoch of new and grander promise for the race.

Were the rude agencies of the battlefield the only influences that were at this hour shaping and moulding the nation of the Scots? Above most countries in Christendom, Scotland possessed a dual character. There was an outer Scotland, the theatre of wars, invasions, and battles; and there was an inner Scotland, the seat of a great spiritual movement which had for its end the educating and training of a nation to serve the cause of truth and liberty in the



ages to come. Was this education making progress? It is the chronicles of the inner Scotland we should most like to write. Amid the wars in which we see the Scots engaged now with the Dane and now with the Saxon was the soul of the nation growing. Was Scotland becoming fitter for its great purpose?

Scotland was growing in skill and valour on the battle-field, but this was not progress with reference to its special end. Scotland was not destined to build up a great empire by arms like Rome. Its mission came nearer to that of Greece: it came still nearer to that of Judea: only it was greatly more intellectual and spiritual than that of either. The special mission of Scotland was to apprehend and hold forth to the world Christianity—the last and perfected form of Divine Revelation—in all the simplicity and spirituality in which man on earth is able to receive it. To say that this was the special mission given to the Scottish nation may seem a merely transcendental idea. Second thoughts however will satisfy us that it is far indeed from being so. Of all systems in the world Christianity is the most powerful in both its individual and its national action. But the power of Christianity is in the direct ratio of its spirituality. The man who rises to the full realisation of what is spiritual and eternal in Christianity, dropping what is temporary, symbolical, and mundane, is the highest Christian. In him we are sure to find the fullest development of its moral and spiritual virtues, because on him Christianity acts in the plenitude of its power. It is so as regards a nation. The nation that attains to the fullest conception of Christianity as a purely spiritual system is the nation where we shall be sure to find the finest manifestation of both the evangelic graces and the civic virtues such as patriotism, valour, philanthropic enterprise, which Christianity nourishes, be-

cause it there operates in the fulness of its moral and spiritual power. It is like the sun shining direct from the firmament without any intervening or obstructing medium to weaken the power of his beams.

It is instructive in this connection to mark that, contemporaneously with the corruption of Christianity at Rome, there came in Britain a great revival of it in its purely spiritual character, first in the ministry of Patrick, and next in that of Columba. In the early days of Iona Christianity was severely simple—simple to severity, and it was then that it won its greatest pre-Reformation triumphs. This simplicity or austerity has all along been a characteristic of Scottish Christianity, and has been conspicuous at every period of its revival. This, doubtless, it owes to the stamp impressed upon it in the age of Columba. This characteristic is sometimes mistaken for coldness or rudeness, nevertheless it is in this that the strength and glory of Scottish Christianity lies. In this form only, disrobed of the garments of Paganism, and set free from Jewish symbol, Greek ceremony, and Roman rite, and presented in all the simplicity that appertains to a spiritual system, can it go round the earth and convert the nations. Observing the behaviour of the Scots at all the testing periods of their history, we discover in them a disinclination to permit their religion to be mixed with ceremony, and a steady desire to preserve the ancient simplicity of their faith and worship. This was shown in the Synod at Scone, which is now to come under our notice; it was shown again in the days of Malcolm Canmore, and it was shown still more conspicuously at the era of the Reformation. So far Scotland has understood and fulfilled its mission.

The materials are scanty for constructing the religious history of Scotland all down the centuries since Columba's



day, and noting the advance of the nation at each several epoch in moral righteousness and spiritual power. That the Columban Church continued to exist all down these ages we know. We come upon the incidental notices of it under the various names of Iona, the Columban Brotherhood, and the Culdees. But we should like to know in what state of purity did that Church exist, and what amount of influence did it exert on the population. The interest of knowing this is great, but the difficulty of ascertaining it is equally great. These ages passed away and left us no written records of the state of personal and family religion in Scotland during them. We know the church arrangement and services, but we are unable to enter the homes of the people and mark the forms in which social and domestic piety displayed itself. We have pictures of the great leaders, but we should have liked a nearer view of the converts and ordinary workers. The first book known to Scottish literature—Adamnan's "Life of Columba"—is not very satisfactory on this head. As our earliest information it is invaluable. It brings out the grand personality of Columba, and the thoroughly evangelical and spiritual character of his great enterprise,—an enterprise which redeemed the age from darkness, and filled half of Europe with light; but around Columba and his work Adamnan has hung an atmosphere of miracle and prodigy. This environment has the effect of lifting him up into a region above the earth, and makes us fain that he would come down and walk among men. It also shrouds his work in an atmosphere that magnifies and mystifies it, and we rise from its perusal uncertain and unsatisfied. Legend, and not fact, was plainly the *forte* of Adamnan's pen.

The next earliest composition in our country's history is the "Book of Deer." Its genuineness is unquestioned. To



Celtic scholars it is a curious and precious relic, and it determines some not unimportant points in our nation's history, and attests, along with other proofs, the marvellous facility of the clerical caligraphists of those days, the extraordinary beauty that marked the productions of their pens, and the delight they took in transcribing the Holy Scriptures. But when we have said thus much, we have exhausted the claims of the "Book of Deer" on our admiration and gratitude. It is not till we come to the reign of David I. (A.D. 1124) that we find anything like firm historic footing. With the times of David we reach the age of charters. Among the earliest engrossed charters extant is one given by that monarch, and is contained, with some six hundred others, in the chartulary of the monastery of Dunfermline. The period covered by this collection extends from the end of the thirteenth century to the middle of the sixteenth. These chartularies form the earliest history of our country, though they do not furnish much information on the special subject of our present enquiry—the Church's purity and doctrine, and the knowledge and piety of her people.

In truth the evidence for Iona as the great Christian Institute of the age—less than Rome in one sense, far greater than Rome in another—is not so much *written* as *monumental*. There is the tradition, which time has not been able to conquer, of its vast renown. There is Pictland, rescued from the darkness of Druidism, and opening its astonished eyes on the dawn of the Christian day. There are hundreds of spots throughout the country, where the names of the great Columban missionaries are still living names, being perpetuated in the churches the Columbites founded, and the parishes in which they laboured, and where they made to flourish the industrial arts and the Christian virtues. Nor

is it Scotland only that offers these indubitable proofs of the learning and evangelical ardour of the pastors of its early church. In what land of northern Europe do we not see the footprint of the Culdee? We trace his steps—blessed of all peoples to which they came—from the Apennine to the North Sea, and from the borders of Bohemia to the shores of the Atlantic. Whose hand save that of the Culdee created those inimitable manuscript volumes which are the pride of so many princely cabinets and conventual libraries on the Continent? These are the memorials of the large development attained by the Columban Church, and the wide area over which it diffused its spirit and teaching. These memorials are daily multiplying as the past comes to light under the researches of the Celtic scholars. But already we know enough to justify the remark that there are few things in history more marvellous than the blaze of intellectual and spiritual light into which our remote and barbarous country burst forth in the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries under the presidency of Iona. Could letters and philosophy alone have kindled such an illumination? The history of nations supplies us with no similar example. The glory into which Greece burst under Pericles, and the splendour of the Renaissance in Western Europe in the fifteenth century; were but fitful and short-lived gleams—meteors of the night—compared with the Columban evangelisation of the centuries named. The eloquent tribute of Dr Johnson to the little isle which was the focus of that illumination is often quoted with applause; it is just, nay generous, and yet it expresses only half the truth, and not even half: and were the great lexicographer to pronounce a second eulogium, if he did not express it in more glowing terms, he would give it a wider application, and in doing so, make it more in accordance with the fact. In addition to



"the savage clans and roving barbarians" of the ancient Caledonia, to whom Iona gave "the benefits of knowledge and the blessings of religion," he would speak of tribes beyond the sea, of famous schools, of princely courts and great monarchs who saw and rejoiced in the light which shone from Icolmkill.

We get glimpses as we pass on of the Columban Church. These however occur at very considerable intervals of time; they are moreover exceedingly fragmentary, and we can only doubtfully infer from them the real state of that Church at the epochs when these glimpses bring her before us. We have come to a record of this sort. In the midst of the wars and calamities of Constantin, whom we have just seen exchanging his throne for a Culdee cell at St Andrews, the Columban Church comes into view. She is seen only for a moment, and again disappears. But as these glimpses are rare, it is all the more incumbent on us to mark rightly what they disclose, touching a society in which was bound up the life of the nation.

In the sixth year of the reign of Constantin (A.D. 906), a great church assembly was holden at Scone. It was presided over by Constantin the king and Kellach the bishop. It was attended, we are told, by the nation of the Scots, that is, by both clergy and laity. The object of this national convention was the reformation of religion, in accordance with the laws and discipline of the faith, the rights of the Church, and the precepts of the Gospel.<sup>1</sup> How much one wishes that one had in full the proceedings of this assembly.

<sup>1</sup> "In vi. anno (regni sui) Constantinus, rex (filius Edii) et Cellachus episcopus, leges disciplinasque fidei, atque jura ecclesiarum, evangeliorumque, pariter cum Scotis in colle credulitatis, prope regali civitate Scoan, devoverunt custodiri. Ab hoc die collis hoc (nomen) meruit, i.e. Collis Credulitatis."—*Chron. Pictorum*. Pinkerton's *Enquiry*, i. 495, 496. Innes's *Appendix*, n. 3.



How interesting to read at this day what was proposed, concluded, and sworn to nine centuries ago. We would willingly give any half-dozen battles of the time for the record of this assembly on the Mote Hill, Scone. But brief as the statement regarding it is, it makes clear and undoubted some not unimportant points in the constitution of the Scottish Church at the opening of the tenth century. One of these points is her complete INDEPENDENCE. No "Letters Apostolic" have summoned this convocation: no papal legate presides over the pastors and members assembled on the Mote Hill. No ecclesiastical functionary of whatever grade from outside Scotland takes part in the debate, or offers advice, or, so far as we can discover, is even present in the gathering. The Scottish Church has met of her own motion, for the transaction of her own business, and she knows nothing of any church authority outside her own territory. At the opening of the tenth century she is seen to be FREE.

And farther, as a second point to be specially noted, she reforms herself on the lines of her own original constitution. Her standard of reformation is the "laws and discipline of the faith," the "rights of the churches," and the "doctrines of the Gospel." Nothing is here said of the canons of Rome; no extrinsic rule or model fetters her in her reformation: what she aims at is a return to the "old paths." It is to Iona, not Rome, that the faces of this great gathering are turned. The time is not now very distant when a cardinal legate will be seen taking his seat in the synods of the Scottish Church, but as yet no such functionary had crossed the Tweed, nor had the Roman purple come to mingle its gleam with the woollen robes of the assembled Culdee pastors.

And further, we accept this national convention as a con-

fession on the part of the Columban clergy of the declension of their church. Their church was now nearly four hundred years old, but when they thought of what that church had been in its youth, when not content with cleansing its own territory from the impurities of Druidism, it had flung itself into the heathenism of Germany and dethroned its time-honoured deities, nay made the thunder of its protest, as in the case of Columbanus, be heard at the gates of Rome itself, and when they contrasted these achievements of its past with its powerlessness now, when not only had it ceased to extend its conquests abroad, but even on its own proper territory it was losing its footing and falling back before its great rival, it was impossible not to feel how melancholy the change which had passed upon their once aggressive and triumphant church. In truth the Columban Church for a century and a half had been on "the down grade." The scissors of Rome had passed upon the heads of some of her clergy, and the very touch of these scissors was benumbing. But now again, by some means or other, there had come to be an awakening; and that awakening was not confined to a class or to a locality, it was general and wide-spread in the land, for here is the nation gathered together to discuss the evils of their time, and set on foot a reformation, not in the way of an approach to Rome or Canterbury. There is not the slightest evidence that this assembly wished to move in that direction; their course is the very opposite; it is back to first principles. The goal at which they wished to arrive, as distinctly defined in the words of the original record, is the "faith," the "church," and the "gospel": not Rome but Iona.

This assembly fittingly crowned their proceedings with a vow or oath in which they bound themselves to prosecute their reformation. So we are expressly told.<sup>1</sup> Nothing

<sup>1</sup> "Devoverant custodiri."—*Chron. Pict.*

could better attest the importance of this council, and the gravity of the matters determined in it, than the solemn act with which they close it. We are not told the shape into which they put their resolutions, nor the heads of their projected restoration, but there can be no doubt about the leading aim and general scope of their reform, and as little can there be doubt about the unity of sentiment and the earnestness of purpose that animated the members of the council. Errors and corruptions had crept in during years of deadness; these must be purged out. The discipline of the church had been relaxed; it must be invigorated. The standard of national morals had been lowered; means must be taken to elevate both the social and family life of the nation. A growing languor and feebleness had afflicted the clergy; fresh oil must be brought to the dying lamp of Columba. And whence was this oil to be fetched? Not from the Seven Hills, not from the traditions of the Pope, but from the fountain at which this lamp had been replenished at first, and its flame lighted, even Holy Scripture. This was the reformation needed. Raising their hands to heaven, the Scottish nation, king, clergy, and people, vow to go forward in this work. A remarkable assembly for the tenth century! We owe not a little to the scribe who has handed down to us this brief but pregnant record of it. It discloses, if only for a moment, the undercurrent of moral and spiritual influence that was flowing in the nation, on the surface of which little was to be seen save the spectacles of oppression and distraction and war. The church of Columba was not dead. Nay, it is seen to have still some centuries of life in it.

The Council at Scone has finished its business. The Columban presbyters have descended the Mote Hill, henceforward to be known as the "Hill of the Faith," and once



more the darkness closes in around the Scottish Church. Much would we give to be able to follow this Assembly in subsequent years, and trace its workings in the Columban brotherhoods and in the homes of the people. That it bore fruit in a quickened zeal and in purer lives we cannot doubt ; but here our information abruptly stops, and our knowledge for a century onwards is only inferential. The Columban church kept its place at the heart of the nation, and though no pen of scribe has given us the picture of those days, and the higher prosperity that brightened them, many incidental facts assure us that for years to come the Scottish Church was instinct with a new life, and, doubtless, gave proof of it in the greater vigour and success with which she worked. We think we may fairly ascribe to this assembly, and the new departure it gave the nation, the arrest of the Roman advance, and the delay for an hundred and fifty years of its triumph. And when at last this triumph was accomplished in the days of Queen Margaret, it was not by the conversion of the Scotch people to the faith of Rome, but by the intervention of the royal power, and the influx into Scotland of a crowd of foreign partisans which brought Rome with them.

This convention was held in the beginning of the tenth century ; in the end of the twelfth century we find the Columban churches still in existence and in action throughout Scotland. This fact, we think, warrants the conclusion that there was a rallying of the spiritual forces and a revival of religion in this Assembly on the Mote Hill, and that the movement did not expire when the members broke up and returned to their homes. They felt the obligation of their oath, the people caught the quickened zeal and new spirit of their pastors, and the forces set in motion continued to act as propelling powers on the country, and kept it on the road of progress despite the retarding influences of war, other calamities.

## CHAPTER VII.

### DESTRUCTION OF EARLY SCOTTISH LITERATURE—THE COLUMBITES METAMORPHOSED—WAS IONA A ROMAN OR A PROTESTANT CHURCH?

How comes it that we are without written record of these times? The day was not long past when Scotland could boast some hundreds of expert pens all busy at work, and to such good purpose that scarce was there glen or hamlet which had not its copy of the Bible. Columba is said to have placed a copy of Holy Scripture, written with his own hand, in every house which he founded. The first care of these sacred scribes was, doubtless, to multiply copies of the Word of God; but, over and above, following the example of Adamnan, it is probable that they compiled an occasional "life" or "chronicle" or "short history" of events. What has become of these compositions? A hundred enemies—the moth, the mildew, the flame—make war on the manuscript volume. To these foes of the early church history of Scotland, we have to add another, peculiar to the age of which we write—the Norseman, to wit. In his eyes these treasures had no value, and were left to perish in the same flames which consumed the monastery in which they had been written and were laid up.

Beset by so many dangers, it was hardly to be looked for that these fragile productions should preserve their existence for a period of time which suffices for twenty generations

to run their course and disappear in the grave. Of the hundreds, perhaps thousands, of MS. Bibles that undoubtedly existed in Scotland in these centuries, only some three or four remain to us; and is it wonderful that those other compositions so very much fewer, and so much less sacred, should have disappeared, and that the life of Columba by Adamnan should remain the one solitary exception to the universal destruction of early Scottish literature?

When we come down to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, it is still more hopeless to look for information regarding the state of the early Columban Church. The writers in the times succeeding Malcolm Canmore knew not Columba. Or if they knew him, they knew him only as the founder of a schismatical sect, whose heads bore the tonsure of Simon Magus, who celebrated the eucharist with barbarous rites, and who walked not in the ways of Roman Christendom. They judged it a wise policy, therefore, to let Columba and his followers sink into oblivion, or to speak of them only in the language of apology and pity, as men who inhabited regions so remote from the centre of Christendom, that they were to be forgiven the errors of doctrine and the eccentricities of worship into which they had fallen. They forgot that the man who possesses the Bible is at the centre of Christendom, let his dwelling-place be at the ends of the earth.

Since the days of Malcolm Canmore, Columba and his church have suffered a still greater wrong. Ecclesiastical writers of the Roman and Prelatic school have, in our own day, done worse than ignore the "Elders of Iona:" they have completely metamorphosed them. They have converted them into the partisans of a cause of which they were the avowed and strenuous opponents. From the day that



Columba laid the foundation-stone of the Scottish Church onward to the time that Romanism gained the ascendancy by the force of the royal authority, the disciples of Columba, inheriting the spirit of their great chief, ceased not to maintain the war against Rome, at times with signal and triumphant vigour, at other times more feebly, but all throughout they retained their attitude of protest and resistance. Even after Malcolm Canmore and his queen had summoned them to lay down their arms, they did not absolutely surrender. Their submission was partial. A remnant still kept up the faith, the traditions, and the name of their country's once famous, free, and virtually Protestant Church. They dwelt in cloisters, in islands, and in remote places of the land, but they continued a distinct body; they compelled recognition and toleration, and they thus made palpable the fact that Rome was not the country of their birth; that their lineage was distinct from that of the clerics who now occupied the edifices from which they had been thrust out, and that they were the children of a more ancient and purer faith. If there is anything true in our country's history this is true; and to go on claiming these men as professing a theology and practising a worship substantially the same as that of Rome, differing, it may be, only in a few rites and customs, owing to remoteness of position, yet in heart one with Rome, loving her and obeying her, is to exhibit a marvellous clinging to a fond hallucination, and a bold but blind fight against established and incontrovertible facts. This is a method of warfare which may bring wounds and death to the assailants, but cannot bring victory save to the cause that is assailed.

This subject of the entire contrariety of Iona to Rome has already come before us. However, we may be permitted here to supplement what we have already

We shall compare the Columban and the Roman Churches in two most essential points—their foundation-stone and their top-stone. Hardly could two things be more diametrically opposite than are these two churches in these two points.

The first foundation-stone of the Roman Church was the Bible. Next it was the Bible misinterpreted ; and long before the time at which we are arrived, the tenth century, the Bible had been thrown aside, and the rule of faith in the Roman Church was the decrees of Councils. The church had become a rule to herself, and so continues to this day. It is a human voice that speaks from the Seven Hills.

The voices of prophets and apostles, silent in Rome, were still speaking in Iona. The echoes of these voices filled the land. By these voices alone were the members of the Columban Church guided. The Bible was their alone rule of faith. This much we learn even from their accusers. We beg again to refer to an authority we have already quoted, the venerable Bede. After telling us that the great light, the "Church," to wit, had never risen on the pastors of Iona, and that they had to grope their way in dubious paths by the Bible alone, he charitably excuses these benighted men on the ground of remoteness from the seat of councils. "For," says he, "dwelling far without the habitable globe, and, consequently, beyond the reach of the decrees of synods . . . they could learn only those things contained in the writings of the prophets, the evangelists, and the apostles ; while they diligently observed the works of piety and love."<sup>1</sup> The unequivocal testimony of Bede then is, that in the Church of Iona and its branches, in the eighth century, the rule of faith was the Bible, and the Bible alone. The phrase, "the prophets, the evangelists, and the apostles."

<sup>1</sup> Bede, Lib. iii. c. 4.

was the common one used to designate the Old Testament, the Four Gospels, and the Epistles, that is, the *whole inspired canon*. And hence Bede adds, "that they had a zeal for God, but not altogether according to knowledge."

Were the divines of Iona really ignorant, as Bede supposes, of the decrees of the councils, and was it because they knew no clearer light than they followed that of the Bible alone? Why then did not Bede, who compassionated the condition of these men, and so earnestly desired to lead them into canonical paths, send a copy of the decrees of the Church to the monastery at Iona? All over the very district in which Bede lived, the Presbyters of Iona were going out and in teaching the natives. Why did not Bede put these doctors in the way of seeing these canons, and so temper and regulate their zeal, which he tells us was not "altogether according to knowledge"? In truth, the Columban evangelists knew well the synodal decrees, but they rejected them because they believed them to be unscriptural. The missionary bands which traversed France and Switzerland and the north of Italy could not have avoided making acquaintance with these decrees, even had they wished to remain in the ignorance which Bede bewails. They were often subjected to persecution because they transgressed the canons in the matter of Easter. We find Columbanus, for instance, writing to Pope Gregory on the subject, and vindicating his own mode of celebrating Easter on the ground that it was strictly scriptural. Ridiculing as "frivolous and silly" the objection that "it was the same as that of the Jews," he warns the Pope, "that to add aught of our own to the Scriptural path would be to incur the censure of that divine command in Deuteronomy, 'Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it.'" And referring to the



faith held by himself and his brethren, he tells Pope Gregory that it was in "all things indubitably grounded on the divine Scriptures."<sup>1</sup> And once more Columbanus, in his letter to the local bishops, lets it be known that he was not ignorant of the *canons* of the Church, which they accused him of violating, but that he owed no allegiance save to "the true and singular canons of our Lord Jesus Christ." And affirming that the churches of Scotland and Ireland grounded their faith on the Scriptures, he exclaims, "Our canons are the commands of our Lord and His Apostles; these are our faith; lo! here are our arms, shield, and sword . . . in these we pray and desire to persevere unto death, as we have seen our elders also do."<sup>2</sup> Anticipating the well-known saying of Chillingworth, the great Culdee missionary exclaims, "The Bible, the Bible is the religion of Columbite." So much for the foundation of the Columban Church.

We come to the other point. What of the crowning rite in the worship of the two churches—the eucharist and the mass. Was the eucharist of Iona substantially the same as the mass of Rome? An attempt has been made by recent ecclesiastical writers to establish, at least, strongly insinuate, that the Columban eucharist and the Roman mass were substantially the same. We find, for instance, a recent historian, not of the Romish communion, saying, "The doctrine of the Scottish Church, in regard to the eucharist, was in accordance with the ritual by which it was celebrated. Its sacrificial character was distinctly recognised, and it was believed that after consecration the bread became the body of Christ. This much is implied in

<sup>1</sup> Columban. Epist. ad S. Gregor Papam. in *Biblioth. Vet. Pet.*

<sup>2</sup> Columban. Epist. ad Patres Synodi cujusquam Gallicanæ, super questione Paschæ congregatæ.

the passages which allude to the eucharist, but in none of them is there any attempt to define the mystery."<sup>1</sup>

To what does this statement amount? It amounts to this even, that the two essential principles in the mass were constituent parts of the Columban theology; for when the writer uses the term "sacrificial," we must understand him as using it in the sense of *expiatory*, and when he speaks of the body of Christ, we must understand him as referring to that which becomes *literal* by consecration. If this is not the meaning of the terms, they have no bearing whatever on the point they are adduced to establish, and the passage is a platitude and nothing more.

An earlier writer, Father Innes, of the Roman Church, quoting a number of phrases which Adamnan and Cuminus make use of when speaking of the eucharist,<sup>2</sup> argues from them that the Columbite doctrine of the Supper was the same in substance with that of the Church of Rome in his own day, and in all former ages. In thus gravely affirming that the Elders of Iona in the days of Adamnan believed substantially in transubstantiation and the sacrifice of the mass, and expressed this belief in the rites of their worship, he assumes his readers to be ignorant, though he himself could not possibly have been so, that the dogma of transubstantiation was not even heard of till nearly two hundred years after Adamnan had gone to his grave, and not till other seven centuries had passed away was the mass decreed to be a propitiatory sacrifice. How these two notable doctrines of the Roman theology should have come to be known

<sup>1</sup> *Ecclesiastical History of Scotland*, by George Grubb, A.M. Vol. i. 146. Edin., 1861.

<sup>2</sup> We give a few samples: "Sacra eucharistiæ mysteria," "Sacrosancta mysteria," "Sacrificale mysterium," "Sacrae oblationis mysteria," "Sacrae eucharistiæ mysteria consecrare," "Sacram oblationem consecrantis," "Christi corpus ex more conficere."—*History*, p. 167.

in Iona so many centuries before they were known in Rome, Father Innes does not explain.

This one consideration alone might be held to settle the question, Was the Columban eucharist and the Roman mass identical? For to show that it was impossible for a thing to have existed, is to show that it did not exist. But the writers to which we refer are not in the habit of permitting themselves to feel discouragement, much less dismay, in the presence of the most tremendous difficulties. They see no absurdity in maintaining that Columba took precedence of Boniface by five centuries, and that while the system of Popery was only in embryo on the Seven Hills, it had reached its maturity on the Rock of Iona, and blossomed into the crowning doctrines of transubstantiation and the mass. Hence the assertions to which we are so often called to listen, that the early Christianity of Scotland was Romanism, that we rendered evil for good at the Reformation when we cast down the altars of a church which had been our first instructress, and abjured a faith which our nation had been taught in its cradle. So stoutly is this maintained, that it becomes necessary to look at the kind of proof which is offered in its support.

The point has not been proved when it is shown that the early church sometimes called the sacramental symbols "the body and blood of Christ," or styled the Lord's Supper "an offering," or spoke of Christ as "present in the sacrament." The question here is not, Did the ancient Church believe in a *spiritual* presence of Christ in the sacramental action, and in a *spiritual* communication of Him to the worthy receiver? The writers to which we refer know well that this is not the question. The question is, Did the ancient Church believe the consecrated bread to be literally and corporeally the Saviour? Neither is the question, Did that Church call the



elements the body and blood of Christ? for all antiquity called the consecrated elements so, as our Lord Himself did at the first Supper. Our Reformers called the bread and wine in the sacrament the body and blood of Christ; so did Calvin style them; and the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, the descendant, as we hold, of the Columban Church, speaks of them at this day as the body and blood of Christ. The question is, What did they mean by that language? The words, "the body and blood of Christ," in themselves decide nothing. They may indicate a material fact or a spiritual doctrine; a change wrought by the priest's potency, resulting in a physical product, or a change wrought by the recipient's faith, resulting in a spiritual benefit. The question to be ascertained from history is, In which of the two senses, the figurative or the literal, was the words used?

They were used figuratively only. On this point the evidence is abundant. Let it be observed that the early church called everything presented to God or laid on His table an "offering," an "oblation," or a "sacrifice." Therefore, the use of these phrases by the early Scottish Church proves nothing. Commenting on Hebrews x. 3, Sedulius, the well-known theologian and commentator of the ninth century,<sup>1</sup> says: "A remembrance is made of sin, whilst every day, and year after year, a victim was offered for sins. But *we* offer daily for a *remembrance* of our Lord's passion, once performed, and of our own salvation, the sacrifice of bread and wine." Nor is this all. In his commentary on the second chapter of Colossians he lays it down as a settled canon of exposition, "That where the *truth* is present there is no need of an *image*."<sup>2</sup> Expounding the institution of

<sup>1</sup> He was abbot of Kildare, and that he was the author of the "Commentaries of the Epistles of St Paul" is the belief of the most eminent antiquarian historians, as Labbe, Mabillon, Bayle, Dr Lanigan, and others.

<sup>2</sup> "Imagine non opus est, veritate presente."—Sedul. on Col. c. ii.

the Supper as contained in 1 Corinthians xi., Sedulius anticipates Zwingli, not in the substance of his doctrine only, but also in the figure which he employs to illustrate it: "Do this in remembrance of Me." Having quoted these words of Christ, he goes on: "He left us His remembrance, just as one setting out for a far away country leaves behind him some pledge to him whom he loves, that as often as he beholds it he may be able to call to mind his benefits and friendships." Again, on verse 29, he adds: "Not discerning the Lord's body, that is, making no difference between it and common food."<sup>1</sup> Here the rite is seen simple and holy, even as it was beheld at the first table, and as it was to be again beheld in the sixteenth century, when, emerging from the ghastly obscuration of the Middle Ages, it became once more the simple, beautiful, and touching memorial of the death of Christ it was designed to be.

We adduce the testimony of Claudius Scotus in the ninth century. "Our Saviour's pleasure," says he, "was first to deliver to His disciples the *sacrament* of His body and blood, and afterwards to offer up the *body itself* on the altar of the cross. For as bread strengthens the body, and wine works blood in the flesh, so the one is *emblematically* referred to Christ's body, the other to His blood."<sup>2</sup> There is here a plain distinction between the *sacrament* and the *body*. The one is the sacrament of the body, that is, the sacred sign or instituted symbol of the body, the other is the body itself. Nor does the commentator leave us to mere inference: he tells us in express words that the one is the *emblem* of the other; even as Augustine had defined a sacrament to be "the sign of a sacred thing."<sup>3</sup> Not less Protestant is the verse of Sedulius the poet. Celebrating

<sup>1</sup> "Id est non discernens ipsum a cibo communi."—Sedul., 1 Cor. xi.

<sup>2</sup> Claudius on Matt. chap. iii.

<sup>3</sup> "Signum sacræ rei."



the Supper in song, he asks, Who else is "present in it but its great Institutor, the true Melchizedeck, to whom are given gifts that are his own, the fruit of the corn, and the joys of the vine"?<sup>1</sup>

In truth, it was impossible for the divines of that age to think or write of the sacrament of the Supper in any other way. No one had yet hinted that the *elements* on the table were other than they seemed, simple bread and wine, though set apart from a common to a holy use, and not dreaming that their meaning could possibly be misunderstood, they spoke of them all the more freely at times as the "body and blood of Christ." But soon, like some phantom of the night, transubstantiation arose, challenging the belief of an amazed and stupified Christendom. The year 831 is a memorable one in the annals of ecclesiological development. In that year an enormity, which four hundred years after came to bear the barbarous name of transubstantiation, had its first conception in the human mind. In 831 appeared the book of Paschasius Radbertus, a French monk, in which for the first time it was propounded to the world that the body of Christ in the sacrament is the very same which was born of the Virgin, and was nailed to the cross. The whole Western Church was astounded. The greatest theologians of the age declared the notion to be absolutely new, and offered it their most strenuous opposition. Nowhere was the repudiation of this stupendous novelty more emphatic than in the Scottish Church and her allied branches. In the front rank of its opponents were the Scoto-Irish divines, among whom was Johannis Scotus, Erigena, the founder of the University of Paris. Scotus was then residing at the Court of Charles the Bald of France, and that monarch called upon him to enter the lists against Paschasius. The

<sup>1</sup> *Cœlius Sedulius, Carmen Paschal, Lib. iv.*



great Culdee scholar responded to the royal call, and wrote a book in condemnation of the revolting dogma, for so did the French Church of that age regard it. Another distinguished divine, Bertram by name, took part with Scotus in his war against the new and monstrous proposition. The book of Bertram, written in refutation of Paschasius, is still extant, and occupies a distinguished place with the Bible in the Index Expurgatorius of Rome. The work of Johannis Scotus had ultimately a different though a not less honourable fate. About two hundred years after, when the doctrine of transubstantiation, strengthening as the darkness deepened, began to make way in Germany and France, Berengarius stood forth as its uncompromising opponent. To maintain himself in the storm of persecution which his bold defence of the truth drew upon him, he appealed to the work of Scotus, as showing that his own views of the sacrament were those of the Church of the ninth century. This drew the tempest upon the book of Scotus without diverting it from Berengarius. The work of our countryman had the honour of being committed to the flames by order of Pope Leo IX., A.D. 1050. But its title has been preserved in the records of the age, and remains to this day to witness to the orthodoxy of the Scoto-Irish Church, and of the Church universal, on the head of the sacrament, till towards the opening of the tenth century. That title runs thus: "The Sacraments of the Altar are not the real Body and Blood of Christ, but only the commemoration of His Body and Blood."<sup>1</sup>

Nor does the use of the term "altar" on the part of the early church in the least assist the Romanist in his argu-

<sup>1</sup> Dupin, Cent. ix. c. 7. Besides the title, a few extracts from the work of Scotus have been preserved, as for instance: "The things that see at the altar are done in show, not in reality." *Specie geruntur veritate.*

ment. It is admitted that the phrase often occurs in the records of early Christianity, but the question is as before, In what sense was the phrase used? History furnishes us with an answer which is noways doubtful. The "altar" of the early church was a wooden table. The "mass" of the early church was a commemorative offering or sacrifice of bread and wine, and the "priesthood" that stood around the table on which this sacrifice was laid were the Christian people, their worship being led by the officiating minister. We find no Roman dogma under the "altar" of the primitive church when historically interpreted. We can see neither sacrificial meaning nor expiatory virtue in the simple offering of bread and wine on the wooden table, transubstantiation and the mass being yet a great way off, and neither in the sight nor in the thought of the early church. All as yet is natural, simple, and spiritual. How absurd, then, is it for the Romanist to maintain that these terms were used by the early church as expressions or symbols of ideas and dogmas which were then, and for many centuries afterwards, unheard of in the world! And it is equally absurd to attempt fastening upon the Columban Church the belief of these undiscovered theological enormities, simply because she made use of the same phraseology when speaking of her religious services which was employed by the whole early church of Christ, that church being ignorant of what unthought-of things the future was to bring forth. The argument of the Prelatist and the Romanist is really this, that seeing the Roman Church after her declension continued to apply to her newly-invented novelties of doctrine and worship the phraseology which the early church had employed concerning a very different doctrine and worship, therefore the Roman dogmas, though not yet promulgated, were the belief of the Primitive church; and of



the church of Columba also. It is a hard task, verily, which these reasoners impose upon themselves. We will not say that they are arguing with conscious absurdity; on the contrary, we willingly admit that they believe in the soundness of their position, for otherwise we cannot account for the persistence with which they press their view upon others, and [the boldness with which they maintain an argument which all outside their circle see to be preposterous.

Let us mark how the picture which Cave gives us of the worship of the early church corroborates what we have said. The strict accuracy and truth of his "Primitive Christianity" have not been questioned, certainly not disproved. "As for *Altars*," says he, "the first Christians had no other in their churches than *decent Tables* of wood, upon which they celebrated the holy eucharist. These, 'tis true in allusion to those in the Jewish temple, the fathers generally called altars; and truly enough might do so, by reason of those sacrifices they offered upon them, namely, the commemoration of Christ's sacrifice, in the blessed sacrament, the sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving, and the oblation of alms and charity for the poor, usually laid upon these tables, which the apostle expressly styles a sacrifice. These were the only sacrifices, for no other had the Christian world for many hundreds of years, which they then offered upon their altars, which were much of the same kind with our communion tables at this day."<sup>1</sup>

The simplicity of the early church was retained at Iona. The "altar" in the monastery of Columba was a wooden table. The sacrifices offered upon it, of which Adamnan so often speaks, were the simple offerings of bread and wine.

<sup>1</sup> Cave's *Primitive Christianity*, Part I. chap. vi. pp. 142, 143. Lond., 1672.



And so, too, as regards the altars of the Columban churches throughout Scotland: they were wooden tables. Even after King Malcolm Canmore had introduced popery with its stone altars and their rich symbolic embellishments, the Culdees stuck to their "honest wooden tables." We are told of the Culdees of St Andrews that they "celebrated the eucharist in a corner of the church," doubtless at their wooden table, and that "this was the Culdee manner of celebrating the sacrament."<sup>1</sup> Dr Lindsay Alexander puts the right interpretation upon this statement when he says: "They administered the sacred ordinance in a way totally different from the Romish ritual, not at the altar, but in a corner of the church—not with the ceremonial of the mass, but with simplicity and humility."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Keledei namque in angulo quodam ecclesia quæ modica nimis erat, suum officium more suo celebrabant."—*Historia Beati Reguli*. Pinkerton's *Enquiry*, vol. i. p. 464.

<sup>2</sup> Dr W. L. Alexander's *Iona*, pp. 115, 116. Prelatic and Romanist historians sometimes give themselves very high airs. They speak as if they had a monopoly of learning and historic insight, and were alone entitled to pronounce on any historic point. Their *ipse dixit* is delivered as if it were entitled to pass current without examination or challenge. Mr Grubb, in his *Ecclesiastical History of Scotland*, sneers at Dr Lindsay Alexander (pp. 145, 146) for the statement quoted in the text, even that the Culdees "administered the sacred ordinance in a way totally different from the Romish ritual." And he gives this as an example of the "assertions of the most absurd description" which "have been made and repeated on this" (the administration of the Supper) "as on many other points connected with the doctrine and discipline of the Columbites." We are not aware that Mr Grubb is entitled to sneer at Dr Lindsay Alexander on any ground. We know, at all events, that in the present case it is Mr Grubb who is open to the charge of advancing an "assertion of the most absurd description" in connection with the doctrine and discipline of the Columbites. He refutes the statement of Dr Alexander by quoting the words of Adamnan and Cuminus: "Sancti Columbæ, ante altare stantis, et sacram oblationem consecrantis." Behold holy Columba standing at the altar, and consecrating the sacred oblation. The words prove nothing as regards the question at issue, and as a refutation of Dr Alexander they are utterly frivolous. All they prove is this, that Adamnan, along with the whole early church, called the communion

And such, too, were the altars of the early church of Ireland. The bread and wine of the eucharist were presented on wooden tables. These continued in use in Ireland in many places, at least, down to the end of the twelfth century. When the bishops of Adrian IV. and the soldiers of Henry II. (1155) conquered Ireland, and bound the yoke of popery upon the necks of its sons, it is significant that the wooden tables were cleared out and altars of stone substituted.

We quote in proof the constitutions and canons made by John Comyn, Archbishop of Dublin, and confirmed by Pope Urban III. in 1186. The first canon "prohibits priests from celebrating mass on WOODEN TABLES, *according to the usage of Ireland*, and enjoins that in all monasteries and baptismal churches altars should be made of stone. And if a stone of sufficient size to cover the whole surface of the altar cannot be had, that, in such a case, a square entire polished stone be fixed in the middle of the altar, where Christ's body is consecrated, and of a compass broad enough to contain five crosses and the foot of the largest chalice. But in chapels, chantries, and oratories, if they are necessarily obliged to use wooden altars, let the mass be celebrated on plates of stone, of the before-mentioned size, firmly fixed in the wood."<sup>1</sup>

With the change in the altar has come a change in the spirit of the worship. This sacrifice is no longer one of thanksgiving and commemoration: it is one of expiation,

table an altar, and the bread and wine an oblation. If Mr Grubb shall insist that they prove more than this—that they have a Roman sense, that the terms "altar" and "oblation" imply transubstantiation and sacrifice—then Mr Grubb must show how that was possible in the case of words used centuries before either name or thing was invented. When Mr Grubb has done this, then he will be entitled to rebuke Dr Alexander for committing an absurdity.

<sup>1</sup> *Ware's Bishops*, by Harris, Dublin. Article Comyn.



and can be fittingly offered on an altar of stone only—although the altar on Calvary was of wood. Neither are the materials of the sacrifice the same: the bread and wine have undergone a change strange and awful: they embody a stupendous mystery, for which Christendom has as yet found no name, and which it has not dared to define, but which continues to shape itself more and more into dogmatic form, till at last Innocent III., in the thirteenth century, gives it dogmatic decree, and, coining a new name for the new prodigy, calls it Transubstantiation, and commands it to be piously received and believed by all the faithful.

The use of the term “mass” in the early church would seem to favour even more the Romanist contention, yet, when examined, it is found to possess not one particle of weight in the argument. Nothing is more easy of explanation than the simple and natural, we might say Protestant, use of the term “mass” by the primitive church. When the sermon was ended, and the Supper was to be administered, the catechumens, and all others not members of the congregation, were bidden depart. The church was careful to exclude from participation in the eucharist all whose knowledge was defective or whose lives were unholy. This was called the dismissal, or the *missio*. In no long time the term—*missio*—was appropriated to the ordinance which followed immediately on the departure of the ordinary hearers, in which the “faithful” only were permitted to take part. Such was the origin of the term “mass,” which was in use for ages before transubstantiation was decreed or the ceremonial of the Roman mass enacted. Let us hear Cave, whose statement is in strict accord with all ancient history on the point.

“No sooner was the service thus far performed,” says Cave, “but all who were under baptism or under the dis-



cipline of penance, *i.e.*, all that might not communicate at the Lord's table, were commanded to depart, the deacon crying aloud, *Οσοί κατηχουμενοι προελθετε*. Those that are catechumens go out. In the Latin Church the form was *ITE MISSA EST*; depart, there is a dismissal of you: *missa* being the same with *missio*; as *missio*, oft used in some writers for *remissio*, and so the word *missa* is used by Cassian, even in his time, for the dismissal of the congregation. Hence it was that the whole service, from the beginning of it until the time that the hearers were dismissed, came to be called *Missa Catechumenorum*, the mass or service of the catechumens, as that which was performed afterwards as the celebration of the eucharist was called *Missa Fidelium*, the mass or service of the faithful, because none but they were present at it; and in these notions and no other the word is often to be met with in Tertullian and other ancient writers of the Church. 'Tis true, that in process of time, as the discipline of the catechumens wore out, so that the title which belonged to the first part of the service was forgotten, and the name *missa* was appropriated to the service of the Lord's supper, and accordingly was made use of by the Church of Rome to denote that which they peculiarly call the mass, or the propitiatory sacrifice of the altar, at this day. And the more plausibly to impose this delusion upon the people, they do with a great deal of confidence, muster up all those places of the fathers where the word *missa* is to be found, and apply it to their *mass*; though it would puzzle them to produce but one place where the word is used in the same sense in which they use it now, out of any genuine and approved writer of the Church for at least the first four hundred years."<sup>1</sup>

A shadow of this ancient custom has continued to linger

<sup>1</sup> Cave, *Primitive Christianity*, Part I. chap. ix. pp. 282-284.

in the Greek Church to our own day. We find a recent traveller in the East thus describing a scene which he witnessed in St Sophia, the venerable cathedral of Justinian at Constantinople. "The Epistle and Gospel for the day having been read, the Liturgy of the common service proceeded to its close, when the catechumens, according to primitive eastern custom, were, with a blunt force, bidden depart, although, now, nobody stirs, or is at all expected to do so. The liturgy of the faithful, as it is called, or of the members of the church proper, then began, which bore from its commencement on the dispensation of the Holy Communion."<sup>1</sup>

One cannot help wishing that the age of miracles would return, and that Columba would rise from his grave and tell us what he thinks of those who put this strange sense into his words, and whether he judges them true interpreters of his meaning. We can imagine the warmth with which he would repudiate the belief of notions which were only then beginning to have their first feeble inception in certain minds, and which it required seven centuries to bring to dogmatic form and embody in church ritual. Not a little astonished, perhaps not a little indignant even would he be to find himself claimed as a disciple of doctrines which had not in his day found expression in human language, and which, when announced to the world three centuries afterward, startled and amazed it, and drew forth from an unanimous Christendom a declaration that till now these doctrines had been unheard of, and were as revolting as they were novel. But there is no need to bring up Columba or any of the Columban fathers to tender their evidence on the point.

<sup>1</sup> *Christianity East and West: an Ecclesiastical Pilgrimage*, by Thomas Grieve Clark, p. 277. London, 1889.

These Fathers speak to us in the records of the past. The missionaries nurtured in the school of Columba and sent forth by his church, preached with one voice that Christ's sacrifice was finished, that redemption was complete, and that the bread and wine on the communion table were the simple memorials of a death accomplished once for all, and never to be repeated. In their sermons and writings we hear the voice of Columba. The testimony of history is as decisive as a witness from the dead could be ; and they who refuse to yield to its force would, we fear, remain equally unconvinced although Columba himself should rise from his tomb.



## CHAPTER VIII.

A.D. 942—971.

REIGNS OF MALCOLM I.—INDULF—DUFF—CULLEN—SCOTLAND'S ONE TALENT.

MALCOLM I., son of Donald, was the successor of Constantin, the monarch whom we saw, in a former chapter, descending from the throne to pass his age in the Culdean Monastery of St Andrews. With Malcolm I. there opens a series of obscure reigns which it were tiresome and wholly without profit minutely to chronicle. Constantin had left to his successor a legacy of political troubles, the settlement of which occupied the first years of Malcolm's reign. The task was a difficult one. The spirit of the nation had sunk low, its arms tarnished, its bravest leaders fallen in battle, and violence lifting up its head in the provinces, but the new king grappled manfully with the evils that confronted him on all sides. He first put himself right with his neighbours of England; he next gave the Danes to know that it was at their peril should they set foot on Scottish earth while he filled the throne. Finally, he addressed himself to the work of restoring order at home. He purged his tribunals from the corruption of venal judges. He coerced by the terrors of his justice those whom the sense of equity and honesty could not restrain. He repressed with a firm hand the lawlessness which had grown up under the former reign. These measures made every peaceable man his

friend; but they made all who delighted in robbery and pillage—and they were not few—his enemies. He was occupied in pursuing some robbers in Moray, and attempting to make the power of his sceptre felt beyond the Spey, the boundary of Alban, when he perished by the dagger of an assassin. The Pictish Chronicle says that the men of Moerne slew him at Feteresso, in the parish of Fordun, Kincardineshire; “but the later chronicles remove the scene of his death farther north, and state that he was slain at Ulurn by the Moravienses, or people of Moray.”<sup>1</sup> St Berchan places his grave at Dunotter. Malcolm’s death took place in A.D. 954, in the thirteenth year of his reign.

Malcolm I. was succeeded by Indulf, the son of Constantin. The most notable event of Indulf’s reign was a fresh invasion of the Danes. These visits, which were growing more familiar but not more welcome, came to brace the patriotism of the nation when in danger of becoming relaxed. The Norsemen crossed the sea in a fleet of fifty ships. They ravaged the southern shores of England. Intent, however, on gathering more booty before returning to their own country, they sailed northward and entered the Firth of Forth. Their appearance spread terror along both shores of the Firth. The timid left their houses and fled. The courageous hastened to the beach, and mustered in such force that the Danes deemed it prudent to withdraw. Dropping down the Firth past the May, their galleys crept round the “Neuk” of Fife and entered the estuary of the Tay. Again a phalanx of determined combatants lined the shores of the river, and the invaders saw that neither here was there safe landing place. They sailed away, and coasting along the shores of Angus and Mearns, they arrived off Buchan, searching all the way for unguarded creek or bay

<sup>1</sup> *Pict. Chron.* Skene’s *Celtic Scotland*, i. 364, 365.

into which they might run their galleys and let loose their ravaging hordes like a flock of vultures upon the land. The coast bristled with defenders ready to grapple with the foe should he dare to land, and throw him back into the waves. The invaders put their helms about and bore away to the Danish shore. It was a feint. After vanishing in the blue, they suddenly reappeared. Finding the coast unguarded, they landed unopposed in Banffshire near Cullen. Brief time was given them to pillage and slay. Indulf soon came up with them, and the two armies were instantly in hot combat. The Danes were worsted and driven to their ships, and hoisting sail, this time in earnest, they made off to their own country. King Indulf had fallen in battle, and the throne of Scotland was again vacant.<sup>1</sup>

One other event in Indulf's short reign of eight years must we note. His father, Constantin, fleeing before Athelstan, had abandoned the Lothians, and with the Lothians a city destined one day to be the capital of Scotland, to the English. What the father lost the son recovered; for in Indulf's days Edinburgh took its place once more among Scottish cities, not again to come into possession of strangers, or be ruled by any but a Scottish sceptre.<sup>2</sup>

Duff, the Black (962), was the new king. He was an excellent prince, if the uncertain records of these far off times may be believed. Fordun calls him a man of dove-like simplicity, yet the terror of rebels, thieves, and robbers. Cullen, the son of his predecessor, attempted to seize his throne, in violation of what in those days was the established order of succession, even, that the brother or nephew and not the son succeeded the deceased monarch. Cullen carried

<sup>1</sup> *Chron. Pictorum*, No. 3. lxxx. On the moor west of Cullen are several mounds of various sizes, believed to be the memorials of this battle.

<sup>2</sup> *Chronicon Pictorum*. Pinkerton's *Enquiry*, vol. i. 496.



his cause to the battle-field and was defeated. Among the slain was Dunchad, Abbot of Dunkeld.<sup>1</sup> One wonders what business he had in the battle at all. The incident, however, is significant. It tells us that a great change had now taken place in the office of abbot. The temporal possessions of the abbacies had been disjoined from the spiritual duties of the office, and these institutions had come to have a dual head. The lands, converted into a hereditary lordship, were owned by families of high rank, and the spiritual duties were performed by a prior. This enables us to understand why an abbot should appear in arms on the field, and his corpse be found among the slain when the fight had ended.

Duff the Black had vindicated on the battlefield his right to reign, but now he was attacked by an enemy from whom arms were powerless to defend him. The king was seized with a strange disorder. His physicians did not understand his malady; they certainly failed to cure it, and accordingly they found it convenient to refer it to a cause which their art did not enable them to cope with. The king, it was said, was pining away under the withering power of wicked spells. His illness shut him out from superintending in person the administration of justice, and this was almost tantamount to a suspension of government; for unless the king were present to pass sentence, and see it carried into execution, crime went unpunished. The king's sickness was a golden opportunity for the thief and the robber. The lawless waxed the bolder from the confident belief that the king was on his death-bed, and would never again put himself at the head of affairs. Duff, however, falsified

<sup>1</sup> "Bellum inter Nigrum (Duff) et Caniculum (Cullen) super Dorsum Crup, in quo Niger habuit victoriam, ubi cecidit Duchad abbas Dunkalden."—*Pict. Chron.* The Annals of Ulster under the year 965 mention a battle among the men of Alban themselves, in which many were slain, and among others the Abbot of Dunkeld.

these evil auguries. Shaking off his malady, he arose from his couch, to the terror of the evil-doer, and proceeded to call to account marauders of every degree, from the serf to the noble. The king, according to the later chroniclers, visited the counties of Moray and Ross, which had become hotbeds of arson and rebellion. He succeeded in apprehending the ringleaders, and, bringing them to Forres, he made them be publicly executed. But this act of righteous vengeance, which the king hoped might inspire a salutary dread of law in districts where it was flagrantly set at nought, gave mortal offence to the governor of the royal castle of Forres. Among those who had expiated their crimes on the gallows were some of the governor's and his wife's relations, for whose lives they are said to have made supplication to the king in vain. They waited their opportunity of revenge. On his way to the south the king halted to pass the night at the castle of Forres. Occupied in tracing to their haunts robbers and outlaws the king's fatigues had been great, and his sleep was deep. The guards at his chamber door were drugged. At midnight two assassins were admitted into his bedroom, and these promptly did their cruel work.<sup>1</sup> How was the gashed and mangled corpse of the monarch to be disposed of? The morning would reveal the bloody deed of the night. In the darkness the current of a neighbouring river was diverted from its course, a grave was hastily dug in the bed of its channel, and when the body of the murdered king had been deposited in it, the waters were again turned on, and the stream was made to flow in its accustomed bed. The spot where the royal corpse was hidden was near or under

<sup>1</sup> "Vir pacificus, sed tempore ejus partes boreales latrones perturbarent, quos dum comprehendere perrexit in cubiculo occisus est."—Major, *Hist. Scot.*, Lib. iii. cap. iv.

the bridge of Kinloss. The regicide, despite this ingenious device for concealing it, did not long remain undiscovered, nor did its perpetrators escape the punishment their crime merited. The body of the king was exhumed and carried to Iona. His death is placed in 967.

Cullen, the son of Indulf, who, as we have seen, had attempted to snatch the crown from the brows of a worthier man than himself, now held the sceptre. The power he had so ardently coveted he now lawfully possessed, but notoriously and shamefully abused. There is a consent amongst historians that Cullen, the son of Indulf, was one of the worst kings that ever reigned over the Scots. He set no bounds to his licentious pleasures. John Major calls him "the Scottish Sardanapalus."<sup>1</sup> He infected the youth of the nation with a vice which of all others saps manly virtue, and is fatal to noble resolve. The cares of government were neglected: the nobles fled from his court, and the people were fleeced to maintain the revels of the palace. Such a course could have no other than a violent ending. An assembly of the Estates met at Scone to concert measures for correcting the disorders of the State. Cullen was invited to meet them, and on his way thither he was waylaid and slain at Methven by Rohard, Thane of Fife, into whose family his liaisons had brought dishonour and distress. He had reigned four years and six months.<sup>2</sup>

Scotland, at this hour, gave but small promise of ever

<sup>1</sup> Major, *Hist. Scot.*, Lib. iii. cap. iv. In the extract given on a previous page from the *Chronicles of the Picts* he is styled *Caniculus*, a whelp, from *Cu*, a dog; an expression which implies contempt, and would seem to intimate that Cullen was the worthless character which he has been represented.

<sup>2</sup> An English chronicle says that Cullen fell in battle with the Britons. It has been suggested that the author probably meant the Scotch Lowlanders. Guthrie's *History of Scotland*, vol. i. p. 188; Buchanan, *Hist. Scot.*, Lib. vi. c. 79. It is also said in the *Pict. Chron.*: "*Culen et frater ejus Eochadius occisi sunt a Britonibus.*"



attaining the high destiny to which it seemed to be so surely and so rapidly advancing under Columba and his immediate successors. Its strength had been weakened in the way; it had turned aside from the only road that led to the goal which in former years it had so eagerly striven to reach. It looked as if fated to fall back into its primeval barbarism, and never see the good land of a perfected spiritual and political liberty. Scotland had received but one talent: it was therefore all the more incumbent on it to preserve that one talent, and trade with it, and turn it to the best possible account. Some of its neighbours had received ten talents. They had been gifted with ample territories, with a fertile soil, with a delicious climate, and the arts and letters which their ancestors had perfected and transmitted to them. But none of these rich endowments had fallen to the lot of the "land of brown heath and shaggy wood." Scotland had received but one talent, and that one talent was Bible Christianity. If it should trade upon it and wax rich and great, and outstrip its neighbours with their ten talents, well; but if it should fold its one possession in a napkin and bury it in the earth, what had Scotland besides? It had squandered its all, and had nothing before it in the ages to come but poverty and serfdom.

This was now no mere untried theory to the Scots. They had tested the power of their one talent, and seen that it had in it the promise of a richer recompense to those who should trade with it in the market of the world than all the ten talents of their neighbours of France and Italy and other countries. It was Iona, in other words Bible Christianity, which had made Scotland to burn like a lamp in ages not long gone by. It was this which drew kings and princes from afar to its shore, and made them proud to breathe its air, and converse with its wise men.

dom of its schools. When Iona arose the fires of Baal ceased to blaze, and the cruel sacrifices of the Druid were no longer offered. Then Scot and Pict, instead of meeting in deadly strife on the battlefield, met in peaceful assembly in the sanctuary. The painted Caledonian disappeared from his native straths and hills: the savage transformed into the civilized. The plough went forth to make war upon an ancient sterility, and bid the barren field rejoice because the time had come for the springing of flowers and the waving of golden harvests. Commerce was putting forth her earliest buds in that tender spring time. The artisan was perfecting the cunning of his right hand in homely achievements. Architecture was training its infant skill for the erection of more pretentious structures than the wattle-built hut. The loom was sending forth fabrics of finer textures and richer colours, which shewed that the weaver's art was as yet far from having reached the limits of its resources. The trader had begun to make ventures beyond seas, and the return visits of the foreign merchant gave a powerful stimulus to the industry of the country by the proffered interchange of home commodities with foreign products. The marvellous transformation now passing on the face of the country was the work of influences as silent but as irresistible as those by which Spring transforms the landscape, bringing it out of death into life and beauty; but all these influences had their fountain-head in Iona. Scotland was trading with its one talent, and reaping an hundredfold.

But the men of the tenth century only dimly apprehended all this. Their fathers of the sixth and seventh saw it clearly, and knew what they did when they laid the foundations of Iona. They called into existence a church, simple and pure, whose glorious mission it should be to redress the spiritual balance of Christendom which had been



destroyed by the corruption of Christianity in its original seats, and so repair the wrong done the world by churches which had betrayed their great trust. It was a bold enterprise, but they acted in faith, and faith is the truest foresight and the highest statesmanship. Its work alone endures, rising triumphant over opposition and temporary defeat, and surviving those changes and revolutions which sweep away the clever schemes of the mere Church and State politician, and bury the name and fame of their author in oblivion. But the men of the tenth and eleventh centuries in Scotland had waxed weak in a virtue which has been the strength of all strong men in every age, and which was eminently the strength of their fathers. "What good," they had begun to ask, "will this old-fashioned creed do us?" It may have served to guide our fathers, but our sky is brightening apace with a new light! Surely we shall not err if we exchange the pale and dying ray of Iona for the rising glory of that ancient and apostolic church which has her seat on the Seven Hills. Let us not be singular; let us not separate ourselves from the rest of Christendom; let us not dwell alway outside the habitable world. So spoke many of the Scots. How plain is it that they had begun to despise their "one talent," and were burying it in the earth.

A decline had set in which called for an immediate corrective. That spiritual force which had its seat in the hearts of the people, and, though unseen, acted night and day upon the nation, ministering nurture and upholding order, was largely withdrawn, and unless some terrible danger shall arise to absorb all passions in the one great passion of enthusiasm for country, the nation will consume and waste away in the enmities, the outrages, and the bloody feuds, which, in the relaxation of their great bond of cohesion, have already deformed the country, and, continuing to



operate, will ultimately destroy it, converting the glory of the seventh century into the bye-word of the eleventh. Better that the cruel Viking should burn and slay, than that Scot should fall by the hand of Scot ; and that strangers in time to come should point to the fallen country, and say : Its sons perished in no battle for their independence, nor were they crushed by the force of foreign arms ; their undoing came from themselves. They allowed their light to go out, and now they sit in darkness.

## CHAPTER IX.

A.D. 971—995.

REIGN OF KENNETH—BATTLE OF LUNCARTY—HOUSE OF  
HAY—ALTERATION OF LAW OF SUCCESSION.

THE Scots had halted in their path, or rather they had stepped out of it, and gone aside from the straight course, and they needed to be beaten back to it with the rod of national calamity. In no long time we find them smarting from a stroke, which doubtless they deplored as a misfortune, but which they ought to have accepted as a benefit. There, again, on their eastern coast were the Norse galleys filled with warriors athirst for blood, wielding battleaxes rudely fashioned of bog iron, and swords sharpened and tempered by more skilled artisans than the armourers of Scandinavia.

These marauders had crossed the main to load their ships with booty and captives, and go back to their own land and there revel in the spoil. That was all the Vikings thought of or cared for. They had come forth, however, on another errand, though they knew it not. They had been summoned from their fiords to reunite the sundered parties of the Scots, by concentrating in one supreme struggle for independence the passions and energies which meanwhile were being expended on petty personal feuds, and recall to a sense of duty a nation that was becoming unconscious of its high mission.

But first an occupant has

throne. The dissolute life and brief reign of Cullen had, as we have seen, been brought to a sudden end on the highway by an act of violence which had been provoked, though not justified, by his own criminal amours. It required some courage, one should think, to sit down on the fatal Stone of Scone, after recent experiences of the cares and risks that waited on royal power in Scotland. Kenneth, the third of that name—an honoured name in the royal line of the Scots—the brother of Duff the Black, was the successor of Cullen. No sooner had he mounted the throne (971) than he addressed himself to the task of setting in order a kingdom which had, as might well be believed, under such a ruler as Cullen, fallen into confusion. It was rare indeed that there was not a smouldering rebellion in one or other of the northern counties. But this danger was greatly aggravated by an evil which it was more difficult for Kenneth to reach with his arms than insurrections in Lochaber or Ross-shire. The numerous islands which besprinkle the western seas, and which charm the eye of tourist with their picturesque beauty or their rocky grandeur, were in those days so many "cities of refuge," whither the thief, the robber, the man-slayer, and the rebel could flee, and where he might defy justice. The difficulty of coping with this evil was the greater from the circumstance that the Norwegians had begun to exercise at times the sovereignty of these islands, and were not unwilling to weaken the power of the kings of Alban by extending their protection to the enemies of their government. If Kenneth could have submerged this harbourage of outlaws and freebooters in the waves of the Atlantic, he would, no doubt, have robbed our western coast of much of its attractiveness, but he would have lightened the cares of his government, and consolidated the  
re of his kingdom. He had begun to grapple with the



monster evil, and was making some progress in its suppression, when his attention was called away to another quarter of his dominions. Nothing, Kenneth doubtless thought, could be more unfortunate at this moment. It placed the king and the Scottish nation between two fires. On the west were a score of isles about to blaze into insurrection ; in the east hung the Norwegian war-cloud, in the dark folds of which slumbered the lightnings.

Never had such a flotilla of Norse war-galleys been seen as now cast anchor off the Red Head on the Angus coast. For some days they did not move from the spot, but hovered above the shore, like a flock of birds of prey, as if they wished to render the inhabitants helpless through terror before swooping down upon them with their battle-axes and sharp-edged swords. It was being debated on board whether they should make their descent on England or on Scotland. England, it was argued, was the richer land, and there they would gather greater abundance of spoil, whereas in the northern and poorer country they could hope to glean but little, and that little with greater peril owing to the fiercer nature of the people. But over against this the Norsemen had to set the consideration that in either case they should be unable to avoid an encounter with the Scots, who might possibly hasten to the help of the English, if only to ward off the danger from themselves, and thus they should have to fight two nations instead of one. The wise men of the Norse council therefore resolved to strike where they were. Rounding the tall cliffs of the Red Head, their galleys entered the estuary of the Esk at Montrose, and the invaders leaping on shore, carried sack and slaughter along the banks of the river ; and meeting with no opposition for some days, they extended their ravages southward to the Tay, and westward along the great valley of Strathmore.

The king was at Stirling when the news reached him of this new invasion of the old enemies of his kingdom. Kenneth mustered what forces he had with him, and giving orders for the rest of the population to arm and follow, he set out to meet the invaders. The Viking host had by this time penetrated into the interior and come to Perth. The two armies met near the confluence of the Tay and the Earn. The battle that followed is one of the more famous in the history of these invasions. Both Dane and Scot burned with hereditary hate. What had the pagan Viking to do in this land? It was not his, and the Scot was determined that it never should be his. If he comes here to find a grave, he shall have it; but as regards these mountains and plains, they have been the dwelling of the Caledonian from immemorial time, and what was the possession of our fathers, shall be the possession of our sons. So said the Scots. In this spirit it was that the battle was joined.

It raged with sanguinary fury. What a soft and gracious spot the scene of the conflict looked at sunrise; but before noon, battle had transformed it into a very shambles, frightful to behold, although the rage with which the combatants struggled with one another made them heedless of the horrors around them. Hacked and mutilated trunks, cloven skulls, lopped-off limbs, Dane and Scot stretched out and clutching one another, their faces darkening in death, and their eyes still burning with the fire of battle, strewed the fair meadows on which the conflict took place, and dyed the two rivers which water the valley which war had made as ghastly as its usual aspect is sweet and inviting. The day had gone against the Scots, and they were beginning to escape from the field in terrified crowds. It was now that an incident occurred which turned the fortunes of the

battle, and threw a romantic gleam of patriotic heroism over its carnage.

It happened that a stout yeoman and his two sons were ploughing in a field which lay in the track of the fugitives. Indignant at seeing the Scots turn their back on the enemy, he stopped his plough, unyoked his oxen, and arming himself and his sons with the implements of their husbandry, he took his stand right in the path of the run-aways, and, partly by reproaches and partly by blows, he arrested their flight, and compelled them to face about and resume the battle, himself and his two sons heading the fight. Courage is as infectious as cowardice. The old Caledonian war spirit, which had stood its ground before the Roman legions at the foot of those very mountains which looked down upon this battle with the Danes, flamed up in the breasts of the Scots. The Viking host was defeated; and the day, which till now had been full of disaster, and was closing darkly over the Scots, was turned with almost magical quickness into one of victory.

The story, doubtless, has received some embellishments in its transmission downwards, but its historic supports are too numerous to permit of its being regarded as wholly legendary. The incident, in some form, must have occurred, for how otherwise could it have obtained the footing it has got in history, both written and heraldic, as well as in the traditions of the country? The ground itself witnesses to the fact. The broken weapons and the fragments of skeletons which are dug up in it, tell of some long past, but fiercely-fought battle. The name of the stout and bold peasant who changed a moment of dire peril to his country into one of glorious triumph was Hay. He entered the field a simple ploughman, he strode out of it a belted knight. If ever after he put hand to plough, it was to till the wide —



which his grateful sovereign gave him as a reward of his valour in the fertile Carse of Gowrie. Thus were laid the foundations of the noble house of Errol.

Boece and Buchanan, and the historians who follow them, have told the adventure of Hay and his two sons in the battle of Luncarty with circumstances not, indeed, impossible or even improbable, but of a character so surprising and romantic as to make the truth of the story be suspected. Why, it has been asked, should Hay and his sons have been ploughing their fields when a desperate battle was raging at no great distance from them? In occurrences like this there are always circumstances involving difficulty which a full narration of details would satisfactorily clear up. Were the whole facts of the case known to us, which they never can be, there is little doubt that the patriotism of Hay and his sons would stand clear of all suspicion. Against this one objection to the story we have to set numerous concurring testimonies in favour of its actual occurrence. That a battle of a very sanguinary description was fought with the Danes at Luncarty will, we suppose, be generally granted. That the stout Perthshire yeoman may have come in at a critical moment and turned the fortunes of the battle, is surely not an impossible occurrence. How often has it happened, in both ancient and modern warfare, that the heroism of one or a few men has all at once changed the aspect of conflict and turned defeat into victory? This is the substance of the story, disengaged from its accidental circumstances. That such a feat was performed by Hay we have many corroborative evidences. There is the widespread popular tradition. Boece and Buchanan did not create that tradition. It existed long before their day, and must have had its first origination in an achievement of the character ascribed to Hay. There is, moreover, the armorial bearing given the

family of Errol, in which are conspicuous the agricultural implements which their brave ancestor so suddenly converted into weapons of battle to the discomfiture of the Danes. And finally, as corroborative of the achievement, we have the high position of the house of Errol from an early time. Their descendant was High Constable of Scotland in the reign of Robert the First, and if we mistake not, the present representative of this noble house fills the same high office.

After this, Scotland saw some tranquil years. Strengthened by this great victory, the king laid his hand more heavily upon the thieves and robbers that infested the northern counties. He brought in what would now-a-days be called an Option Bill, giving these worthies a free choice betwixt an honest life and the gallows. He taught the nobles reverence for the crown; he threw his shield over the common people, protecting them from rapacious exactions. Arts and agriculture revived in the breathing space given them from the home robber and the foreign plunderer, and Kenneth embraced the opportunity offered him by the quiet and contentment that prevailed to effect an important alteration in the law of succession to the crown, of which we shall speak presently.

After the battle of Luncarty, Kenneth, we are told in the Chronicle of the Piets, built forts on the banks of the Forth, doubtless to prevent the incursions of the Danes. It is interesting to know that in those days the Forth was liable to be visited by those black fogs which embarrass at times the navigator in the same waters in our day, and which kept Mary Stuart three days on end from landing when she came to take possession of the Scottish throne. In the Saxon Chronicle the Forth is termed Myreford, the mirk or dark firth; and so does it figure in the Norse sagas, where the name given it is Myrk-va-Fiord. Having done his best



to bar the entrance of the Danes into Scotland by way of the *Dark Frith*, Kenneth set out to ravage Saxonia. History throws no light on the causes which tempted him to this expedition, or the results that flowed from it, beyond the somewhat improbable statement that the King of the Scots carried captive a son of a king of the Saxons. If Kenneth carried off any one it was probably some Northumbrian ruler of inferior dignity. And here the Chronicle of the Picts closes with the intimation that this King (Kenneth) gave the great city of Brechin to the Lord."<sup>1</sup>

In the early ages of the Scots, and down to the reign of Kenneth III., the crown, as we already said, did not pass directly from father to son. On the death of the monarch it was not the next of kin, but the one of all his relations who was judged the most fit to govern, that was chosen to succeed him. The arrangement was demanded by the state of the country and the character of the Scots. It needed a man of mature understanding and firm will to govern a people so impetuous, and at times so intractable. These qualities were not to be looked for in one of tender years. Accordingly, on the demise of the sovereign, the Estates assembled and chose a successor, taking care only that the person elected, in addition to possessing the requisite qualifications, should be of the stock-royal—that is, a descendant of Fergus the First, King of the Scots. The nobles in the main were averse to a change in their ancient law, which had worked well. But the king pressed the matter. He pictured the evils that attended the present mode of election

<sup>1</sup> "Cinadius autem vallavit ripas vadorum Forthin. Primo anno perexit Cinadius, et prædavit Saxoniam, et traduxit filium regis Saxonum. Hic est qui tribuit magnam civitatem Brechne Domino."—*Pict. Chron.*  
 Dr Skene is of opinion that the Pictish Chronicle was written at Brechin  
 sign of King Kenneth, seeing it breaks off with the intimation of  
 † this city by Kenneth to the Lord.—*Celtic Scotland*, i. 369.



to the throne, the intrigues and contentions of candidates, and the seditions, conspiracies, and wars that sometimes were fostered by disappointed competitors: and he represented on the other side that by enacting that on the death of the king the crown should pass directly to his son, and if that son were of tender age, that a regency, consisting of the wisest in the nation should be appointed till he attained majority, all the advantages of the present system would be retained, and all its inconveniences avoided. To these arguments Kenneth is said to have added others of a more palpable kind to gain the concurrence of the nobility. Be this as it may, the king carried his project, and the law of succession to the crown, which had obtained since the foundation of the Scottish monarchy, was from that day changed. It was enacted "that the king's eldest son, for the future, should always succeed to the father, whatever his age should be; likewise, if the son died before the father, that the next of kin should succeed the grandfather. That when the king was under age, a tutor or protector should be chosen, being some eminent man for interest and power, to govern in name and place of the king, till he came to be fourteen years of age; and then he had liberty to choose guardians for himself." This change in the law extended to other things besides the throne. The law of succession in private families is said to have been altered or modified at the same time.

Bœthius and Buchanan have loaded the memory of this prince, who on all the other transactions of his reign acted a wise and upright part, with the guilt of procuring the death of Malcolm, Prince of Cumberland, to make way for the direct succession of his own son. The Scottish king at that time held Cumberland as a feudatory of the English monarch. The arrangement was mutually advantageous,

being a bond of amity between the two kingdoms, and a defence to England on its northern boundary against Danish invasion. The governor of Cumberland was commonly regarded as heir-apparent to the Scottish throne. He held an analogous position among the Scots, as Cæsar under the early emperors, or as the Dauphin of France or the Prince of Wales in our own day. The management of the little principality was an admirable apprenticeship for the government of the larger kingdom. The Prince of Cumberland under Kenneth III. was Malcolm, the son of Duff. He was pre-eminent among the Scottish youth for manly and princely qualities, and his advent to the throne was looked forward to with eager expectation by the nation. It so happened that about the time that Kenneth began to agitate for a change in the law of succession, Malcolm, Prince of Cumberland, died. The king appeared touched with a genuine sorrow for the loss of the prince, and gave him a funeral becoming his rank, and the place he held in the nation's esteem. The fact that the two events—the change of the law of succession, and the death of Malcolm, son of Duff, who stood between Malcolm, son of the reigning sovereign, and the throne—were contemporaneous, or nearly so, has furnished Bœthius and Buchanan with presumptive ground for the grave charge they have advanced against this king. Fordun is silent. All the probabilities of the case appear to us to be against the two historians named and in favour of Kenneth, and we refuse to be partners in affixing so dark a stain on grounds so slight on the memory of a monarch who, during a long reign, and under a variety of conditions, some of them sufficiently hard, had maintained a name unblemished as respects magnanimity and honour.

Nevertheless, Kenneth was far from reaping the advantages he had promised himself from the change he had been so anxious to effect in the constitution of the kingdom.



The latter years of his life and reign were clouded by troubles springing out of that very matter. How often, whilst painfully shaping his steps amid domestic snares, he must have wished that the Danes would come back and give the Scottish thanes legitimate vent for their passions and ambitions, by summoning them to the red field of conflict for country ! Even after the grave had closed over him, and all earthly tumults around him had been hushed, save that of the western billows where he lay entombed, this measure continued to vex the country, and to yield a harvest of conspiracies and wars.

The story of the king's end has been variously told ; one thing is certain, that Kenneth III., like so many of his predecessors, died by violence. He had gone, according to *Johannis Major* and *Hector Boethius*, on a pilgrimage to the grave of *Palladius*, whose bones by this time had acquired a wonderful repute for sanctity, and whose tomb had become a famous resort of pilgrimage. After performing his devotions at the shrine of the saint, the king turned aside to visit the castle of *Fettercairn*, of which *Finella*, a sort of Scottish *Herodias*, was mistress. This lady, who owed the king a grudge for hanging her son *Crathilinth* for the crime of making too free with the king's laws and the lives of his subjects, took care that he should not leave her castle alive. *Winton*, however, says that the king was sent away with every token of good will, but that he was slain by horsemen who lay in ambush for him on the road. His death occurred in A.D. 995, and the twenty-fifth of his reign. A funeral cortege is beheld moving slowly westward along the great plain which the *Sidlaws* bound on the one side and the mightier *Grampians* on the other. The royal barge, followed by a flotilla of boats carrying numerous mourners, conveys the royal corpse across the *Sound of Iona* sepulchres of the kings at *Icolmkill* re-



## CHAPTER X.

A.D. 995—1034.

MALCOLM II—CESSION OF Lothian to Scots—Battles  
of Murtlach and Barry—Kingdom of Scotia.

THE first day of Scotland was over, and its second had not yet opened. The visit of Kenneth III. to the tomb of Palladius is a glimpse behind the scenes. It shows that the memory of Columba, Scotland's mightiest name and greatest benefactor, had begun to fade, and that his lamp was growing dim. That lamp was to grow yet dimmer before the new day should shine out. The interval that parted the first from the second and brighter day was filled up with social disorders and political oppressions, under which the nation appeared to be hastening to dissolution. In the career of nations as in that of individuals, it is some only that reach the goal. The most part sink down on the road, and unable to resume the march, remain as wrecks on the highway of the world. Scotland again and again seemed on the eve of being overtaken by this disastrous and dishonourable fate. But ever as the die of its destiny appeared about to be irretrievably cast, the Dane presented himself, and the sight of his war galleys, from which savage faces and cruel eyes looked forth, woke up anew in the breasts of the emasculated Scots their sense of nationality, and gave them once more to feel how exhilarating is the air of the battlefield when the fight is for country and homestead.

Thus they were kept from sinking down outright, and carried through the evil years—and they had not yet seen the worst—till the time should come when they would resume their course on the old lines, but with a breadth and enlargement which they had not known in the first ages of their nation.

We have just seen Kenneth III. laid in his grave with the reputation of a great prince, not unworthily won by his efforts on the battlefield to save his country from the grasp of the Danes, and his less warlike but not less patriotic endeavours to maintain the authority of the laws. It was within five years of the close of the tenth century. Calamity is again seen gathering over the country. Hardly are there gloomier pages in its annals than those in which the early chroniclers record the history of the ten years that succeeded the death of Kenneth III. The succession to the crown was fiercely contested. These contests parted the nation into factions, and brought on civil war. The rapacious nobles took advantage of the confusion and license of the times to oppress the people. Robberies and murders were common. The peaceful pursuits of industry and agriculture were interrupted. The neglect of tillage brought on famine. After famine came pestilence. The miserable inhabitants had no way to flee from the host of evils that pursued them. If they entered the city they were slain by the plague, and if they retired to the country they became the prey of the robber. It was not for the good of the Scots that the Danes should be long absent.

According to the new law of succession as now altered, Malcolm, the son of Kenneth III., was the rightful heir, and ought to have ascended the throne. The funeral obsequies of his parent called him to Iona, and before he could return. Constantin, the son of Cullen, who would

crown under the old law of tanistry, made himself be crowned at Scone. He collected a large force, and endeavoured to support his usurpation by arms, but perished on the battlefield after a troubled reign of a year and a half. The throne was next claimed by Kenneth, the son of King Duff. He too perished on the field of war, but not till eight years of calamities had passed over the country. Grim<sup>1</sup> fallen, the son of Kenneth at last ascended his father's throne (A.D. 1005) under the title of Malcolm II. Fordun gives us a brief but vivid sketch of the character and personal endowments of Malcolm. "The people," says he, "were much better pleased with the actions of Malcolm than of Grim; for there was scarcely a man in the kingdom who could equal Malcolm in the exercises of the field, either in his wars or his amusements. Our Historical Annals<sup>2</sup> represent him as skilful in

<sup>1</sup> This king is often called Grim by the Scottish historians. The best original authorities style him Kenneth, the son of Duff. The chronicles of the Picts and Scots tell us that he was slain by Malcolm, the son of Kenneth, at Moeghavard or Monzievaird.—*Chron. Picts and Scots*, pp. 175, 289.

<sup>2</sup> This phrase is instructive, and ought not to escape our observation. The original is *Annales Historie*. Fordun professes to have earlier records before him, and to found his narrative of Scottish events on the information contained in these writings. There is no improbability in this. On the contrary, it is highly probable that it was as Fordun here in effect says. In the early centuries, Scotland, it is admitted on all hands, abounded in expert writers. These were not mere copyists, but compilers, there is reason to think, of registers and chronicles. Fordun professes to have such before him, and why should he not be believed? These writings are not now extant, but a great variety of causes were operative in Scotland in succeeding times, more than sufficient to account for their disappearance. The fashion at this day is to hold that the early writers of Scottish history had no authentic records, and wrote largely of their own fancy. The native chronicles are thrown overboard, and the sagas put in their room. It seems to be assumed that the early Scottish chronicles are all fable and the sagas all truth. This is absurd. Who is to assure us that the compilers of the sagas wrote only truth? May not too have indulged in flights of fancy? Were they likely to be better informed than writers in the country itself? Worse informed, we



the management of the sword and the lance; and of his bearing to a miracle, hunger, thirst, cold, and the longest watching . . . his great strength and the beauty of his person became the universal theme of applause and praise, till at last the public voice pointed him out as the most worthy of the kingdom."

Malcolm began his reign, as did almost every Scottish king of those days, with an attempt to annex the territory betwixt the Forth and the Tweed to his Kingdom of Alban. He burst into Northumbria at the head of a great army and besieged Durham. The campaign, however, ended in disaster. Malcolm's soldiers were nearly all slain, and the English celebrated their victory after a ghastly fashion. They topped the walls of Durham with a grisly row of Scottish heads.

The Scottish king renewed this attempt in the year 1018 with better success. Entering Northumbria, he met the English army at Carham on the Tweed, and a great battle followed. The English were routed, and the slaughter was immense, for Simeon of Durham tells us that well-nigh the whole population betwixt the Tweed and the river Tees had been drafted into the army, and were left dead on the field. This terrible calamity, Simeon also informs us, did not happen without prognostication. For thirty successive nights before this great slaughter a comet blazed in the heavens and lighted up the skies of Northumbria with awful terror. The effect of the victory was the cession of the territory lying south of the Forth to the Scots: the Tweed was henceforth

should say. The prevalent and popular mood professes to be critical. We would say it is sceptical. It has converted the early history of Scotland into a book of genealogies. It is minute, laborious, without light and shade; without life, and therefore without truth; without purpose, or progress, or lesson—a genealogical tree; a catacomb of dried mummies, mostly kings and bishops; not a history.

the boundary of their kingdom, and a long-cherished object of the Scottish kings had been at last attained.

Sheathing the sword of war, Malcolm unsheathed that of justice. He sent commissioners into all the provinces to see that the laws were enforced against offenders of whatever degree. Soon things began to change. The husbandman resumed his labours, for now he might hope to reap what he had sowed. The tides of commerce, such as they then were, began to flow in their old channels. The trader could carry his goods to market without fear of the robber. Life, under so wise and firm a king, began to wear its old aspect.

But more drastic remedies were needed to restore the tone of the nation. Moral disorders and political antipathies had to a most lamentable extent unloosed its loins and dissolved its vigour. It needed that some great object should combine its strength in a common action. Such occasion arose. The Scots were again summoned to the battlefield to decide not what family or what clan should rule Scotland, but whether there should be a Scotland at all. The nation was at this moment seriously threatened with effacement. The Scots had seen this calamity overtake their neighbours. The ancient race had perished from the soil of south Britain. It had been conquered first by the Angles, next by the Saxons, and it was being overrun at this hour by the Danes. A new people was tilling its fields and occupying the cities of England. The Caledonian all the while had maintained himself on his native soil, and had given place neither to Roman nor to Dane. But horde after horde from the teeming sea coast of northern Europe was being precipitated upon the little nation. The Scots must gather their energies into a combined effort if they would preserve for the world, as one of its most vitalising forces, their peculiar

idiosyncrasy of spirit and fervour of genius. This was now made plain to them. Never before had so numerous an armament been seen on their coast as the fleet of Norse warriors which now entered the mouth of the Spey. It was clear that their purpose this time was not the loading of their ships with spoil, but the subjugation of the country and their permanent settlement in the land. Had they been able to compass their design it is curious to reflect what consequences would have grown from it. The lamp of evangelical Christianity in Scotland would have been extinguished. The divine seeds of the faith, and the consciousness of Scottish nationality, which lay quiescent in the soil during the four hundred dark years that followed, and which burst out afresh in the sixteenth century, would have been trampled utterly out, and would have had no resurrection. Bannockburn would not have been: the Scottish Reformation would not have been: the Solemn League and Covenant, which those who have most deeply studied the history of Europe will be the first to grant saved the liberties of Christendom, would not have been, and the action of the Scottish mind on England and on her vast colonies would not have been. It is impressive to mark that all these consequences hung largely upon the losing or winning of a battle on the shores of the Moray Firth.

The Scottish king had no warning of the coming of the Vikings, and their landing was unopposed. It was some days before a Scottish soldier appeared, and the invaders meanwhile did their pleasure on the defenceless country. They spread themselves over the rich province of Moray, slaughtering in city and hamlet, and making room with their merciless swords for their own wives and children who were to follow them across the ocean. When



intelligence reached Malcolm of the atrocities that were reddening the plains of Moray, he hastily collected a considerable force, and marched to repel the invaders. The first sight of the Danish host struck the Scots with consternation, their ships were so many and their army was so numerous. But that feeling was soon changed into one of exasperation. The frightful devastation around them kindled a desire for vengeance, and they could with difficulty be restrained till the necessary arrangements were made for joining battle. They rushed upon the Danes with a blind fury which cost them dear. They were driven back, and Malcolm was carried out of the field badly wounded. This was no auspicious commencement of a struggle on which so much depended for the Scots.

Was the Dane to conquer and leave Scotland as a heritage to his children? This must have been the question that suggested itself to the mind of Malcolm as he led his dispirited troops southward in presence of the victorious Danes. The kingdom of the Norsemen was spreading like an eclipse over the Scottish land. Each new swarm from across the sea penetrated farther into the bowels of the country, and threatened ultimate extinction to that line of rulers who had received their anointing on the "Stone of Destiny." Orkney and Shetland were already theirs. The Hebrides owned their sway. They had added Caithness and Sutherland and Ross to their kingdom. The retreat of Malcolm with his army looked as if Moray next was given up to them. The Danes believed that it had been so, and that the conquest of all Scotland would speedily follow. They had driven out the garrisons and inhabitants of Forres and Elgin. They treated the peasantry in every respect as a conquered people. They compelled them to cut down the corn for their use, and do whatever work they wished to have

done. They fortified themselves in the castles on the seaboard like men who had no intention of removing; and sending to their friends at home, they invited them to come and plant themselves in the pleasant land.

The bloody day of Murtlach brought a change in the outlook, although it did not entirely dispel the danger that hung over the country. King Malcolm, who had retreated into Mar, worked day and night to save the monarchy. His efforts were rewarded with a more numerous and better disciplined host than the former. The men of Angus and Mearns, the warlike citizens of Aberdeen and other towns, the yeomen of Fife, rallied to the standard of their king at this great crisis, burning to do battle against the invader of their homes. Malcolm, putting himself at the head of this new army, again marched against the Danes. The two hosts joined battle at Murtlach. The action was contested on both sides with obstinate and desperate valour. The ranks thinned fast. The sword hewed terrible gaps in them. The corpses lay thick on the field: citizen and yeoman, Dane and Scot, were heaped up together. The living still continued to strive as fiercely as ever around their comrades, locked in the sleep of death, all heedless now of the ebb and flow of the strife. At length there came a turn in the battle, but it was against the Scots. They had sustained terrible losses, not in men only, but in generals. First Kenneth, thane of the Isles, fell mortally wounded. Next Grim, thane of Strathearn, was stretched dead on the field; and finally Dunbar, thane of Lothian, was struck down. The fall of these three chieftains filled the Scots with dismay, and they fell back.

They were not beaten: they had but retreated to rally on stronger ground. At some distance in their rear was a narrow pass, where Malcolm had lain entrenched while

occupied in sending the tocsin through the southern counties to rally his fighting men. The Scots halted in this stronghold, and waited with a determined front the arrival of the Danes. The latter, believing that the Scots were discomfited and in flight, came on with an impetuosity which lost them the victory which they thought was already secure. They were slain as they came up by the Scots, who waited for them behind their defences. At this stage of the combat their leader fell, and his death disheartened the Danes. The Scots were in the same proportion inspirited. Malcolm saw that the critical moment had arrived. Rallying his warriors, he attacked the Danes with great fury, and the battle was won. The Danish host retreated into Moray, and took up their winter quarters, the sea and their ships in their rear. The loss of the Scots on the battlefield had been so great that they did not venture to pursue the enemy.

Not yet was Scotland rid of the terror of the Dane. This fierce and warlike foe had determined that the Scot should wear his yoke, and Denmark was then a powerful country. Sweden and Norway were under the Danish crown, and this struggle of the little Scottish nation for very existence had to be maintained against the combined strength of three kingdoms. The Danes in addition to their continental territories were now masters of England. In 1017 Cnut the Dane became king of the whole of southern Britain, and the Danes wished to round off their possessions in the British Isles by the annexation of Scotland. This must have seemed to them a task of easy accomplishment after what they had already achieved. In truth the Danes already embraced the little country in their arms. For not only were the islands around its shores the property of the Danes: on the mainland their kingdom came up to almost the feet of the Grampians on the north, leaving only the



southern half of the country to be subdued. This ought not to be long in doing. It seemed impossible for the Scots, weakened as they were by the loss of their northern provinces, and of many of their bravest warriors, long to hold their ground. The struggle was an unequal one : so did it appear to the Danes, whose ambition was excited by the rapid growth of their power, and the recent triumph of their arms on both sides of the German Sea. It would have gone as they reckoned but for the personal valour, intrepidity, and patriotism of King Malcolm, who neither despaired himself nor would permit the nation to despair, but kept it alive, bravely battling till he had brought it through this great struggle on which depended far higher issues than perhaps the monarch foresaw.

The Danes had lost the battle of Murtlach, and tidings of their defeat were on their way to Sueno. Sueno was the representative of the Danish power in England, and governor of the realm in his father's room. He received the tidings very coolly. The loss of one battle could be repaired by fighting another. The ill success of the day of Murtlach would cause only a little delay in the conquest of Scotland, an eventuality already assured, and which nothing but their dogged pertinacity prevented even the Scots seeing to be so. Without leaving his place Sueno issued his orders for a more powerful army, drawn partly from the mother country of Denmark and partly from England, to sail for the coast of Scotland. At the head of this great host he put Camus, the most famous Danish captain of the age. The armament destined to close the reign of the race of Fergus, and carry the "Stone of Destiny" to Westminster before its time, appeared at the mouth of the Firth of Forth. A thrill of battle, not of fear, ran through the Scottish counties, and brought to the shore thousands of defenders. Nowhere could the invaders

find landing place without having first to fight a bloody battle on the sea. The fleet sailed away to Red Head, behind the precipices of which opens the spacious bay of Lunan, and here they found roomy anchorage and quiet landing. They began their operations by seizing the castles on the coast, for so was their usual strategy, seeing it kept open the way back to their own country, if necessity should arise, by a double line of defence, one of forts and one of ships. They marched to Brechin, leaving their track over the rich country but too easily traceable. They besieged the castle of Brechin which nature as well as art had fortified, but finding that its capture would too long delay them, they laid the town and church in ashes, and departed. Their next encampment appears to have been at Kirkbodo, on the ridge of the Sidlaws, where they had the Romans as predecessors, and where they looked down on the valley of Glamis on the north, and on the long slope that extends on the south to the shores of the Tay.

Malcolm meanwhile was not inattentive to the movements of the invading host. He was no more willing to put his sceptre into the hand of Harold of Denmark than Bruce, in an after age, was to put his into the hand of Edward of England. Again the summons to arms went forth, and there flocked to the standard of the king an army of as fierce fighters as the Danes, and who were likely to be none the less brave from knowing that they fought in a better cause. They thought of the day of Murlach, and of their brothers who were sleeping beneath the gory sod of that terrible field. The battle bequeathed to them by the men who had died there they would maintain with an equal valour. They would sooner lie in the same bloody bed than live as hewers of wood and drawers of water to the Danes.

The Scottish king took up his position at Barry, on the



northern shore of the Tay. Camus, having information by his scouts of the approach of Malcolm, led down his men from the heights of Kirkbodo to Panbride, where he could fight with the sea and his ships in sight. Camus had headed the army that conquered England. Those who served under him in this Scottish expedition were veterans. There could await him nothing less than victory in the battle to which he was advancing, and the defeat of the Scots would fall with double force and effect, inasmuch as the blow would be struck, not at the extremities of the kingdom, not in the northern regions, but in the south, in the heart of the country. This must have been strongly felt on both sides, and if it gave hope to Camus it kindled in the Scots, whom Camus saw already vanquished, a courage as fierce as it was fearless.

The two armies were drawn up in order of battle. They stood a day confronting each other. The issue of the fight either way must be momentous, and neither side seemed in haste to begin it. On the second day the battle was joined. No eye witness [gives us the particulars of that eventful field. Tradition alone has preserved the fact of its awful carnage. It speaks of the brook that adjoined the battle-field rolling sea-ward a torrent of blood. Victory was hard to win. Hour after hour the clash of swords and the groans of dying men resounded along the heights of Barry and Panbride. At length the fortune of the day began to incline to the Scots. The Danish leader, seeing that he had lost the battle, withdrew his forces, and retreated toward the Sidlaws. He was pursued, and, before he had got two miles from the field, overtaken, his followers cut to pieces, and himself felled to the earth by some strong arm which sent the good sword it wielded at a single stroke right through his skull. The spot where Camus fell was named in memory



of the event, Camuston, and a tall stone or obelisk in the woods of Panbride with the rust of nine centuries upon it marks his grave.<sup>1</sup> The rest of the Danish army, under covert of the darkness which had now set in, made their way through the downs and sand hillocks that here line the shore to their ships in the Tay. So ended this memorable day. When it opened the Scottish nationality trembled in the balance: when it closed the Scottish monarchy and nation had received new and stronger guarantees, although at the cost of one of the bloodiest of those many bloody

<sup>1</sup> Buchanan mentions an obelisk erected on the ground in memory of this battle. The monument is called Camus's Cross. The figures upon it are much defaced, but so far as they can be made out they go only a little way as an illustration of the action that here took place. They seem to be emblems of devotion rather than of victory. Uncontested tradition, however, assures us that this cross was erected on occasion of Camus's death. We extract an interesting account of this stone from Commissary Maul's MS. History of Scotland, as given in Gordon's *Itinerarium Septentrionale*.

"About eight miles from Brechin, at Karboddo, a place belonging to the Earl of Crawford, are to be seen the vestiges of a Danish camp, fortified with a rampart and ditch, and vulgarly called Norway Dikes; near which is the village of Panbride, where anciently was a church dedicated to St Brigide, because on that saint's day, which preceded the battle, Camus, general of the Danes, pitched his camp there. Not far from hence is the village of Barry, where a mighty battle was fought betwixt the Danes and Scots, with great slaughter on both sides, near the mouth of a small rivulet called Lough-tay. There many little artificial mounts, or tumuli, are still to be seen, within which were buried the bodies of those slain in the fight; and because the soil thereabouts is sandy, the wind blowing away the sand frequently discovers bones of a size much exceeding those of our age. Near this is Camus-Town, a village belonging to the barons of Panmure, and noted for the death of Camus, slain there, it being only a mile from the field of battle. There to this day is to be seen an obelisk. . . . Nine years after I wrote that treatise, a plough turning up the ground discovered a sepulchre, believed to be that of Camus, enclosed with four great stones. Here a huge skeleton was dug up, supposed to have been the body of Camus; it appeared to have received its death by a wound on the back part of the head, seeing a considerable part of the skull was cut away, and probably by the stroke of a sword."—Gordon's *Itinerarium Septentrionale*, pp. 154, 155.

battles which marked the course of that long strife, which gave union and solidity and hardness to the Scottish people, and furnished watchwords to kindle their patriotism in after years when new dangers should present themselves.

These two battles sealed the fate of the Danish project to subjugate Scotland. They showed that it was not to be. Every time the Danish spear touched the Scottish soil it sent a new thrill of life through the Scottish nation, and summoned into existence a new and more powerful phalanx of warriors to defend the country. The Dane at last desisted, for he saw that these repeated attempts were bringing him no nearer to what he sought, but on the contrary were teaching the Scots to beat him, and fattening, alas! the Scottish soil with Danish corpses.

From this time the "Kingdom of Alban" disappears from the page of history, and the "Kingdom of Scotia" comes in its room. This is significant of the advance made by the country under Malcolm II. The blood shed on his battle-fields had not been spilt in vain; on the contrary it had borne good fruit in bringing to the birth the kingdom of Scotland. It was now a century and a half since the Scots and Picts were united under Kenneth MacAlpin. The greater part of that time had been passed in struggles with the Danish and Norwegian power. We now see the final outcome. The two nationalities have been thoroughly amalgamated; the stronger of the two races has come to the front. The supreme effort of the Dane, who had all at once attacked the country from three sides—from England on the south, from Orkney on the north, and from beyond the sea on the east—has been rolled back. The voice of events has unequivocally proclaimed that the future of this country belongs to the Scots. And in meet accordance therewith the Kingdom of Scotland now comes upon the stage. The first historic mention of it is in the chronicle of Marianus Scotus. Scotus,



a native of Ireland, was born in the reign of this Malcolm, and he records his death as the "King of Scotia" on the 25th November 1034.<sup>1</sup> Prior to this the kings of Alban had sometimes been styled "Kings of the Scots," but never "Kings of Scotia." Ireland was the proper "Scotia" of the early centuries, and the transference of the territorial designation from the one side of the Irish channel to the other is the more emphatic from the fact that the first intimation of that transference comes from an Irishman. By the opening of the eleventh century there had come to be a general consent that the country into which the Scots had migrated, and made good on so many battlefields their title to possess and govern, would be the Scotland of the future.

Malcolm II. was the last of the male descendants of Kenneth MacAlpin. He had no son, nor was there any male relative in the collateral line to succeed him on the throne. Nevertheless the ancient race of Scotland's kings does not become extinct. The royal line of Fergus, the founder of the Scottish dynasty, and of Kenneth MacAlpin, the first king of the united nation of Scots and Picts, runs on in the female branch. Although Malcolm II. had no son he left two daughters, one of whom was married to Crinan, lay Abbot of Dunkeld. Her son, Duncan, as we shall see, succeeded to the throne on the death of his grandfather.

Having ended his wars, Malcolm, it is said, devoted the remainder of his life and reign to effacing the ravages of the sword. He rebuilt the churches burned down by the enemy, and indemnified the clergy by liberal benefactions for the losses they had sustained.<sup>2</sup> The religious houses were the first to suffer in an invasion. They contained, it was believed, much treasure which might be harried at little risk, seeing its

<sup>1</sup> "1034 Moelcoluim Rex Scotie obiit 7 Kal. Decembri."—Marianus Scot.

<sup>2</sup> "Ipse etiam multas oblationes tam ecclesiis quam clero ea die distribuit."—*Chron. Picts and Scots*, p. 131.



owners were not men of the sword. The dismantled castles were restored, and the plough was set agoing in districts which, trodden by armies and ravaged by plunderers, had become almost a desert. Malcolm is also said to have rewarded with an ample gift of land those nobles who had so bravely helped him in his campaigns. We meet with no such magnanimous and patriotic king as Malcolm II. till we come to Robert the Bruce. The former fought the battle of his country's independence in circumstances almost as desperate as those in which the latter waged his great struggle.

After all these great services Malcolm II. was entitled, one would think, to end his days in honour and die on the bed of peace. Yet no! if we may believe the Scottish chroniclers. Some of them speak of plots springing up around the brave old king, now eighty years of age, thirty of which he had passed on the throne. If so it were, the conspirators belonged probably to the old factions of Kenneth and Grim, who had opposed his succession to the throne. Malcolm is said to have been massacred in the castle of Glamis. The murderers fled on horseback and mysteriously disappeared. In their haste they rode unawares into the loch of Forfar, the surface of which was at the time frozen over and covered with snow. The ice giving way beneath them, they sank and were drowned. When the thaw came their bodies were discovered, and being taken out were hung in chains on the shore of the lake. Why was it that in the case of so many of the kings of early Scotland the cypress was entwined with the laurel? Whoever mounted the "Stone of Destiny" seemed fated to descend from it by a death of violence. It was pleasant for the Scottish monarchs to be assured that when their reign was over they should come into the sepulchres of their fathers, and sleep at Icolmkill, but not so pleasant to reflect that probably the dagger of an assassin would open to them the doors of the royal vaults.

## CHAPTER XI.

A.D. 1034—1057.

DUNCAN AND MACBETH.

THE times that immediately succeeded those of Malcolm the Second down to Malcolm the Third, better known as Malcolm Canmore, might be dismissed with but brief notice were it not for one circumstance to be immediately adverted to. The events that fill up the interval between the two Malcolms were, it is true, of a tragic character, and stirred deeply the passions of those who were the chief actors in them, but they were aside from the highway of Scottish history, and have left their mark upon neither the character nor the course of the nation. It was the wars of Malcolm II. that most largely contributed to fix the position which Scotland was to hold in time to come. At a great cost it was called to buy its nationality and independence. The effort welded its people together. They were not likely soon to forget Murlach and Barry, and other red fields, nor value lightly what had cost them so dear, or, by yielding to the spirit of clanship, incur the risk of having to fight such terrible battles over again.

The contentions that broke out under the two reigns on which we are now entering were of a commonplace character, the fruit of an ignoble ambition, and they would by this day have been forgotten had it not chanced that the immortal light of genius fell upon them, and invested them with a

halo which, despite their inherent triviality, has given them a place in Scottish story from which they never can be dislodged. Shakespeare, as is well known, has borrowed materials from the transactions of these reigns which he has woven into one of the grandest dramas of the world's literature. We enter, as it were, upon enchanted ground when we come to this period of Scottish history. We are well aware of this, and know that the grandeurs and terrors amid which for some time our path lies are imaginary, and yet despite our every effort to dismiss the illusions that surround us, and see only the realities of the case, the creation of the poet stubbornly keeps its place before our eye as the true image and picture of the time.

More than one attempt has been made of late to unravel the vexed question of how Macbeth stood related to Duncan, and what claims he had, or whether he had any, on the throne. The problem, however, seems to defy elucidation, and after all attempts it remains, we are compelled to say, where it was. Neither Scottish chronicle nor Scandinavian saga—and both keys have been had recourse to—can unlock the mystery. Perhaps one would regret were the obscurity wholly dispelled. The gloom and darkness which overhang the stage, and through which the actors and their actions are contemplated, make them seem gigantic and awful, and fill the mind of the beholder with a vague and pleasurable terror which he would be unwilling to exchange, it may be, for the calm mood to which the prosaic narrative of the historian would recall him. Nevertheless, at the risk of disoblighing or disenchanting our readers we must state the facts of the history so far as they are known.

Malcolm II., as we have seen, left no male heir. He had, however, two daughters, one of whom he married to Crinan, the lay abbot of Dunkeld, one of the most powerful noblemen



of the day in Scotland, and the other he espoused to Sigurd the Stout, the Norwegian earl of Orkney. Through these marriages Malcolm had two grandsons, Duncan and Thorfin. Duncan was the son of that daughter who was the wife of Crinan, Abbot of Dunkeld, and ultimately succeeded his grandfather on the throne. Thorfin was the son of Sigurd the Stout, and lost his father in the battle of Clantarf, when only five years old. So far the lineage of Duncan. It is only when we ask, who was Macbeth ? that the perplexity begins. We have been furnished with two different tracings of the antecedents of Macbeth, and the course of events which led up to the murder of Duncan. The Scotch chroniclers follow one line : the Orkneyinga Saga adopts another : we prefer that of our own historians as being the more probable. According to them Kenneth III., the immediate predecessor of Malcolm II., had a granddaughter named Gruoch. This Gruoch had a son named Luach, whose claims to the throne under the old law of succession were about as good as those of Duncan, and might have made him a formidable competitor to Duncan but for his weakness of intellect. Gruoch's first husband dying, she took for her second Macbeth, the mormaer of Ross and Moray. The nearness of Macbeth's son-in-law to the throne gave some colour to Macbeth's pretensions to it, the more so that he possessed in eminent degree the qualities for governing so signally lacking in Luach.

The Scottish throne of those days was no seat for an indolent man. Unhappily the "gracious" Duncan who now filled it was an easy, good-natured prince. He loved to take his kingly duties leisurely. While the northern robber pillaged and murdered with expeditious haste, Duncan punished with deliberate slowness. In no long time the Highlands were in a blaze. The easy-going king saw that he must

bestir himself and stamp out the flame, otherwise it would spread to the other provinces of his kingdom, and the northern rebel would do what the Dane had not been able to effect. The rising was headed by a chieftain named MacDowal, who had drawn to his standard the western islanders and the more daring of the Irish by the hope of plunder, and the assurance of perfect impunity under a monarch "fitter," he said, "to reign over droning monks than over brave men." The king sent a troop to quell the insurrection, but the soldiers were cut in pieces, and their leader was taken and beheaded. It was now that Macbeth came to the front. He offered, were the command of the army given him, along with Banquo, thane of Lochaber, speedily to crush the insurgents and restore the reign of law.

If Duncan knew the real character of the man he must have felt it equally difficult to accept or to decline his proffered help. Macbeth was possessed in eminent measure of those qualities which Duncan lacked. He was brave, energetic, of large capacity, of quick genius, to which he added a boundless ambition. Duncan had no choice except to put himself into the hands of Macbeth. He and Banquo were sent against the rebels. They smote them with discomfiture, and the land had quiet.

Macbeth could hardly feel other than contempt for the man who took his ease on the throne, while he left to himself the labour of governing the country. "Would that I were king," we hear the ambitious Macbeth say to himself, "the country should soon have rest." Perhaps he persuaded himself that the throne was rightfully his, on the principle of the fittest and not the nearest. On the point of fitness as between the two there could be but one opinion. Moreover, the thane of Ross was mated to a wife who spurred him on in his resolve to be king. Not that she was the demon

which the dramatist has painted her, so far as history discloses the character of Lady Macbeth, but her mood was masculine, and she was not likely to be swayed by any tenderness of heart where her husband's advancement was at stake.

As regards the precise way in which Macbeth removed Duncan and opened his own way to the throne, there have been various conjectures. Shakespeare makes Duncan perish by treachery in the castle of Glamis. Others say that he was waylaid and slain on the road to Forres. Macbeth, a brave man, was not likely to seek to compass by treachery what he could attain by open and bold means. We incline to what is now the general opinion, that the mormaer of Moray found a pretext for coming to an open rupture with King Duncan, and taking the field against him. A battle is said to have been fought betwixt them on the 15th of September 1040, at Bothgouanan, probably the modern Pitgaveny, near Elgin, in which Duncan, after a reign of five years, fell, and Macbeth took the throne.<sup>1</sup>

The Orkneying Saga gives a different version of the career and death of Duncan. It is in substance this. On the death of Malcolm II. a fierce war broke out betwixt the two cousins, Thorfin, earl of Orkney and Caithness, and Duncan, King of Scotland. Duncan demanded from Thorfin the cession of Caithness, as being part of the kingdom of Scotland, leaving him in possession of the sovereignty of Orkney. Thorfin refused to surrender Caithness, and Duncan prepared to wrest it from him by force of arms. Both sides raised great armies. There followed many sanguinary battles both on land and sea. The war drew at last into the province of

<sup>1</sup> *The Chronicle of the Picts and Scots* (p. 65), Tighernac under 1040, and the later chronicles all agree in this account of the death of Duncan and the usurpation of Macbeth.



Moray, and Macbeth, the mormaer of that province, became the leading general of King Duncan. In the end Duncan sustained a crushing defeat; and when Macbeth saw that Thorfin had conquered and would retain possession of all his authorities, he slew his sovereign, went over to the side of Thorfin, and divided the kingdom with him. So far the Orkneyinga Saga.<sup>1</sup>

It is out of these doubtful and slender facts that the mighty dramatist has constructed his tale of crime and horror and remorse. If history has gone but a very little way to assist him in his work, the power of his genius is all the more conspicuous. The actors are commonplace, so too are their actions, but the touch of Shakespeare kindles these ordinary incidents into grandeur. It is like the rising of the sun on the snowy Alps: where before there stood a range of dull cold mountains, there is now a chain of blazing torches. The stupendous embodiment of ambition, of pride, of cruelty, and of iron will which is presented to us in the person of Lady Macbeth is not the Gruoch of history, it is the Gruoch of the poet's creation. The remorse of Macbeth and its fearful workings are too a picture which Shakespeare only could have painted. How solemnly does he read to us in the horror-stricken man the lesson that the Nemesis of crime is within. It is not the ermined judge nor the black scaffold, it is CONSCIENCE that is the avenger; and the moment the act is done, the vulture begins to gnaw. It is himself whom the murderer has slain.

<sup>1</sup> Dr W. F. Skene, in his *Celtic Scotland* (i. 400-405), gives at large the Orkneyinga Saga as the probable explanation of this obscure part of Scottish history. It is not safe to differ from so eminent a Celtic scholar and judicious historian, but Dr Skene himself accompanies the Saga with a caution to the effect that its authority is not absolute. He says, "Although its authority is not unexceptionable, and the events it records are not to be found elsewhere, the narrative still carries with it an air of truth, and it supplies a blank in the meagre records of the time which supplies a clue to their real character."

Not less is the genius of Shakespeare shown in finding a fitting scene for his awful tragedy. He has placed it just where such a drama was possible. It would have been out of place in France or Italy. In the actors in the drama there is a depth of passion, an undemonstrative but terrible force of purpose which are not within the capabilities of Frenchmen or Italians. Their constitutional frivolity and levity would have unfitted them for sustaining their parts with seemly decorum amid such grandeurs and horrors. They could not have helped letting it be seen that they were moved by only a mimic rage and despair. In the remorse of Macbeth there is not a little of the Puritan. Such a remorse was possible only in a land where something of the strength and tenderness, the brightness and the gloom of Puritanism as it was afterwards to be exhibited, had already found entrance. And as regards Lady Macbeth, she is the exaggerated expression of some of the less amiable qualities of the Scottish character—its doggedness, its self-resource and self-control—qualities which we meet with every day in humbler examples, but which, in the great instance before us, are shown in colossal size. The triumph of the poet is complete. This epoch in our country's annals he has made to disappear, and has put his own grand fiction in its room. And despite that we are perfectly conscious of the deception he practises upon us, we willingly yield ourselves to the spell of his genius, and would part with more regret with the fiction of the dramatist than with the facts of the historian. The three hags on the moor of Forres, the lady or demon of Glamis Castle, the midnight horror in the royal bed-chamber, the alarms and consternation which the morning brought with it, these never were, and yet they keep possession of history's stage as if it were rightfully theirs.

uncan has fallen, and Macbeth, the son of Finnlac, has

climbed over the royal corpse into the vacant seat. We expect to see the usurper become the tyrant ; and if we credit Fordun, we are shut up to the conclusion that the slayer of the king was the oppressor of the people. But all the indications of authentic history point in another direction. The picture of Scotland under Macbeth, as seen in the obscure records of the time, is not that of an oppressed and distracted country ; it is rather that of a land at peace, and in the quiet of good government, prosecuting its husbandry, extending its commerce, and adding yearly to its wealth. The reign of Macbeth lasted seventeen years, and of those ten or a dozen were years of exceptional prosperity. "Brimful," says St Berchan, sketching in one vivid phrase Scotland under Macbeth, "brimful was Alban, east and west." The new sovereign displayed excellent talents for governing. He was a man of penetration, and saw that the best means of making his subjects forget the iniquitous act by which he had become possessed of the throne was to use the power thus obtained for their good by the exercise of an upright and vigorous administration. Even a bad law is preferable to no law, that is, to absolute lawlessness ; and tyranny is a less calamity than unrestrained licence. Macbeth acted on this maxim when he made justice be administered and law obeyed in all parts of his dominions and by all classes of his subjects. Scotland now steadied itself, and forgot the distractions of Duncan's reign in a ten years' prosperity.

Nor was Macbeth unmindful of the Church. We read of "Macbeth, the son of Fiunlaec, and Gruoch, daughter of Bode, granting the lands of Kirkness to the Culdees of Lochleven, from motives of piety and for the benefits of their prayers." And yet another gift, even, the lands of Balgryne to the same fraternity, "with veneration and devotion." The deed of gift is in the simplest form. It is made to "Almighty



God, and the Culdees of Lochleven." It is to be noted that in this dedication there is no mention of Pope, or Apostle, or Bishop. Kirkness and the lands of Balgyne are given directly to the Culdees, who are described as "the servants of God," no other party having right or interest or property in the inheritances bequeathed.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless the Nemesis of the guilty act by which Macbeth had seized the power which he turned to so good account both for himself and for his subjects continued to dog his steps. It needed no "weird sister," like those who are said to have greeted Macbeth on the moor of Forres, to foretell in what way he should descend from the *Lia-Fail*, to which he had raised himself by the dagger. Meanwhile no one was in a position to oppose him. The sons of Duncan, Malcolm and Donald, were probably of tender years when their father was slain, and till they should be grown to manhood Macbeth might promise himself the quiet possession of the throne. When they saw that their father was dead and that his slayer was on the throne, the young princes fled from a land where their lives were no longer safe. Donald is said to have made good his escape into the western isles. Malcolm found refuge in England. Edward the Confessor was then on the throne of that kingdom, and having known what exile was, he gave all the more cordial and gracious a welcome to the young prince who sought his protection in his evil day. Years passed on: Malcolm grew to manhood: the time came for asserting his claim to his ancestral kingdom, and with it came the power of making it

<sup>1</sup> Machbet filius Finlach contulit per suffragiis orationum et Gruoch filia Bodhe rex et regina Scotorum, Kyrkness Deo omnipotenti et Keledeis prefate insulæ Lochlevine cum suis finibus et terminis. The town of Kirkness and the lands of Balgyne here given Deo Omnipotenti et Keledeis are declared to be exempt from all military and civil imposts and burdens.—*Thron. of St Andrews*, p. 114, 12. See Skene's *Celtic Scotland*, . 401

good. Siward, the powerful Earl of Northumberland, was a relation of Malcolm's, the sister or the cousin of the Earl being Malcolm's mother. Siward now resolved to assist his relative Malcolm to recover his paternal throne. The expedition undertaken for that purpose is obscurely hinted at in the Saxon Chronicle and in the Ulster Annals. We are told in the former that in the year 1054 Earl Siward went with a large army into Scotland, that he invaded it with both a land and a naval force, that he made great slaughter of the Scots, but that their king escaped. Siward only half accomplished his object in this expedition. He installed Malcolm in the provinces of Cumbria and the Lothians, but he failed to overthrow the usurper and give the throne to Malcolm. Meanwhile Siward died, and the matter rested for a few years, Malcolm reigning as King of Cumbria, and Macbeth occupying the Scottish throne.

From this time Macbeth himself seems to have prepared the way for his own downfall. The approach of the rightful prince and the forebodings with which it filled the usurper brought back the memory of his crime, and appears to have wrought in him a morose and gloomy temper. He saw conspirators in the nobles of his court. His suspicions fell mainly on Banquo, the most powerful nobleman in his dominions, to whose posterity the prophecy of some witch, as tradition says,<sup>1</sup> had given the throne after Macbeth. He is said to have invited him to a banquet, and dismissed him from the royal table with every mark of kindness, although he had already given orders that assassins should waylay him on the road as he rode homewards. Banquo murdered,

<sup>1</sup> The apparition of the three witches on the moor of Forres, which gives such terror and grandeur to the tragedy of Shakespeare, is the invention of Boece. Winton says it was no more than a dream which Macbeth had. The truth probably is that Macbeth gave out that he had had such a dream to sway popular opinion in his favour.

Macbeth is said to have transferred his suspicions to Macduff, thane of Fife, and after Banquo the next most powerful nobleman in Scotland. One day, when it happened that Macbeth and Macduff were together, the testy monarch growled out a threat which made Macduff feel that his destruction was resolved upon. The thane of Fife fled into England, but Macbeth, baulked of his prey, confiscated his estates. The nobles made haste to get away from the court, not knowing on whom the royal displeasure might next light. The affections of the people toward their monarch were cooled. These latter acts effaced from their memory the many good deeds of Macbeth's better years. They saw the man who had formerly been swayed by justice now governed by passion. The friends of the late king who had feared to show themselves came forth and began to demand that the son of the murdered Duncan should be recalled and placed on his father's throne.

Macduff, driven into England, would naturally open communications with Malcolm, who, these three years had been contentedly governing his kingdom of Cumbria. He would tell him that the Scots were tired of Macbeth, that they were ready to receive back the son of their former king, and he would urge him to take the field and strike for his paternal inheritance. Prince Malcolm resolved to do as the thane of Fife had counselled. Tostig, the new Earl of Northumberland, came to his help in this second attempt to recover the throne, and he soon found himself strong enough to advance into Scotland. The national sentiment rallied in his support as soon as he appeared. The force he brought with him was recruited by daily deserters from the standard of Macbeth; and so overjoyed were the soldiers at these presages of victory, that, as Buchanan tells us, they placed green boughs in their helmets, liker an army returning in



triumph than one advancing to battle. They found, however, that the campaign was not to be ended by a single blow. Their antagonist was brave, resolute, and was now grown desperate, and a good deal of hard fighting was required to drive him from the throne. Few trustworthy details of the campaign have come down to us. One thing is certain, it ended in the defeat of Macbeth. He was driven across the Mounth, and slain by Malcolm at Lumphanan in Mar on the 15th day of August 1057.<sup>1</sup> The uproar of civil war was instantly drowned in the rejoicings of the Scottish nation around the Stone of Destiny, on which they now saw seated the scion of their ancient kings, and the crown, wrested from the usurper, transferred to the brow of its rightful owner. Malcolm Canmore was king.

<sup>1</sup> Marianus Scotus and Tighearnac, both contemporary authorities, give this as the date of Macbeth's defeat and death. The Ulster Annals add that he was slain "in battle," and the later chroniclers "at Lumphanan."

## CHAPTER XII.

A.D. 1057—1087.

MALCOLM CANMORE AND WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR.

SCOTLAND was on the threshold of great changes. The day on which Malcolm Canmore took his seat on the *Lia-Fail* at Scone and assumed the crown of his ancestors, may be said to have been the first day of the new age. The war with the Viking now lay behind the Scots. They had brought their nationality and independence out of these bloody fields not only intact, but more consolidated than ever. But the nation had not yet made its final escape from the refining fires of the battlefield: the struggles that lay before it were different in kind and higher in character than those rude contests which had exercised their strength till now. The past battle had lasted two centuries; the coming one was to continue four hundred years, and to conquer in it would demand greater patience and a more enlightened patriotism than had sufficed to win victory on previous fields.

The new invaders were not to come clad in mail and brandishing spear; they were to appear in the soft garb of peaceful ecclesiastics. This was a mode of warfare the simple-minded Scots did not understand. It was easier for them to withstand the battle-axes of the Dane than the sophisms of the priest. Armies of stealthy-paced men, with shorn crowns, hands clasped in prayer, and eyes up-turned, as if they deigned not to regard the earth on which they

trod, or coveted aught upon it, were to cross the Tweed, and without fighting so much as one pitched battle, were to take possession of the country and spread their tents by its river sides, and appropriate its meadows and pasture-lands as their peculiar inheritance, leaving the more sterile parts, the bare moor, and the rocky mountain, to the children of the soil. For an invasion like this the Scots of the twelfth century were but ill prepared. The oil in Columba's lamp was far spent, its flame had sunk low, and the consequence was that the men who had boldly met the Danes and chased them from their shores, or flung them into Scottish graves, were likely to offer only a feeble fight to the champions of an arrogant ecclesiasticism, and in the end bow their necks to an authority that claimed to be Divine.

For a short space, however, this battle was postponed. Other cares pressed on the attention of Malcolm the "big head" and his Scots, who, though they had waxed valiant in the fight of arms, were grown lukewarm in that other combat which it was their special mission to maintain with that great spiritual power which was trampling on the independence of all nations, and was about to put her yoke on their neck. Let us first briefly narrate these preliminary occurrences before coming to the greater battle beyond.

It is the 14th October 1066, and the knights and warriors whom William Duke of Normandy has led across the sea are mustering on the field of Hastings. The battle about to be joined betwixt Harold and William is for the crown of England. With the close of the bloody day comes a close to the life and reign of the English king. Harold is stretched a corpse on the field, and his crown has passed to the conqueror William. In the short, stout, iron-featured, deep-thoughted, slow-speaking Norman duke the English have found a master. They saw without alarm the sceptre pass



into his strong hand; but when it began to grow into an iron rod they knew what the Norman victory on the field of Hastings imported, and stood aghast at the vista it had opened. Nevertheless the tyrant of Normandy was the best friend of the England of that day. William found the country without unity, and therefore without power: it was transferring its sceptre from one weak hand to another; it was wasting its blood in useless battles, and its patriotism in party strifes. Progress had become impossible to it; but when William stood up, this miserable antagonism of interests and parties, which was pulling England in pieces, had an end. Faction fled before him. Angle and Saxon and Dane, to which we have now to add Norman, began to cohere and grow into one people, and now England entered on its great career.

William had fulfilled his mission. He had called into being the great English people of the future, and ought to have rested content with what he had accomplished. But like almost all men who have been the special favourites of fortune, and have been visited with sudden and overflowing success, William did not know when he had finished his work and come to the limit beyond which no effort of ambition and no strength or skill in arms could carry him. And now we are brought back to Scotland, the independence and nationality of which was again brought into jeopardy by the triumph of the Norman arms in England.

It is not easy to determine whether it was Malcolm Canmore or the English monarch who was to blame for the fierce war that now broke out betwixt England and Scotland. Certain it is there is no bloodier chapter in all the Border history of the two kingdoms than that which we are now called briefly to write. There were interested motives on both sides prompting to a policy of war. William might

feel that his English conquests were not secure till he had enclosed them within the four seas, and could stretch his sceptre from the Channel to the Pentland Frith. And it was equally natural for the Scottish king to seek to fortify himself against the formidable danger which had suddenly risen on his southern frontier by expelling the Norman from the throne of England, and seating upon it a scion of its ancient kings. Malcolm has been all the more open to this suspicion from the circumstance that the heir to the English throne was now his brother-in-law. And yet it does not appear to have been Malcolm but William who took the initiative in this enterprise.

Edgar Aetheling, the representative of the royal family of England, was now resident at the court of Malcolm Canmore. How he came to be so we shall immediately see. William the Conqueror saw danger to his throne in the escape of Edgar to the Scottish court, and demanded that the royal fugitive should be given up. Sooner than surrender into the hands of his enemy the prince who had cast himself upon his protection, Malcolm would risk crown and kingdom and all. His refusal incensed the haughty ruler of England, and his anger was still more inflamed by seeing Malcolm open the gates of his kingdom to the crowd of Saxon nobles who, chased from England by the terror of William, had flocked to Scotland. Flushed with success, the Conqueror would deal with the little country as he had dealt with the greater: he would add it to his English possessions, and of the two countries make one England. His victorious arms had already accomplished a greater achievement.

William sent his army, but did not come in person. According to the English chroniclers, the main authority for these warlike events, he gave the command of his forces to an Earl Roger. William's lieutenant never returned to tell



him how he had sped. Approaching the Scotch border his army was routed and dispersed, and himself slain by his own soldiers in expiation of his want of skill or his want of success. William sent a greater army, giving the command of it to the Earl of Glo'ster. Glo'ster perpetrated an harrowing amount of sack and pillage as he advanced northward, but won no victory. Before him was a champaign country, where the plough was at work, and villages smiled ; behind him was a devastated land, strewn with corpses, and darkened with the smoke of burning habitations.

A third army, more numerous than the first two, William is said to have sent against Scotland. The command was given to his brother Odo, formerly Bishop of Bayeux, now created Earl of Kent. Odo had no better success than his predecessors. Having gleaned what remained of the spoil of these provinces, Odo was returning southward laden with booty, when Malcolm fell upon, dispersed his army with great slaughter, and returned to Scotland with troops of miserable captives in his train. Even yet William was incapable of perceiving that he had undertaken a task beyond his power.

Instead of dying out, the war acquired new life. The powerful monarch with whom the Scottish king maintained this combat now felt the necessity of bringing all his resources into it, and the flames burst out in greater vehemency and on a wider area. The Saxon chronicle tells us that in the year 1072 King William came in person into Scotland, sending his fleet into the Tay, and marching his land troops round by Stirling to Abernethy, and there he came to terms with Malcolm, the King of Scotia.

There is a consent of English historians as regards this march into Scotland of William the Conqueror. It receives some appearance of probability from the fact that in 1072



he had made a conquest of the Isle of Ely, and this might afford him leisure to raise an army and strike at the root of all his dangers by subduing Scotland. The English say he entered Scotland by Galloway, the provinces of Durham and Northumberland being so depopulated and ravaged that they could not subsist his army on its march through them. Ailred,<sup>1</sup> Abbot of Rivaux, says that he traversed Lothian and Stirlingshire, crossing the Forth by the Carse, the great gateway of entrance into the northern division of the kingdom of Scotland. Florence of Worcester tells us that he penetrated to Abernethy, his fleet being in the Tay. Neither king could feel at ease in view of fighting. If William should be defeated he could not hope to carry back his army into England. If Malcolm were beaten, the loss of battle might be to him the loss of his kingdom. This gives probability to the statement of the English chroniclers, in which the Scotch agree with them in the main, that a peace was patched up betwixt the two princes, that Malcolm "became William's man," that is, for the possessions he held in England, and that he gave Duncan, his eldest son by his first wife, Ingibiorg, as a hostage. The youth was then about ten years of age. After this transaction William, we are told, led back his army into England.

We should but weary and indeed disgust our readers by dwelling farther on these raids, the accounts of which are so various, so confused, and so conflicting. Only one thing about them is certain, even the immense destruction of human life which they occasioned. The area of their devastation enlarged and contracted by turns. Now the strife would confine itself to one unhappy district; then it would expand,

<sup>1</sup> Ailred puts the following words into the mouth of Walter l'Espee, "*Angliæ victor Willelmus per Laodoniæ, Calatrim, Scotiam usque ad Abenith penetraet.*"

and cover the whole of what is now Yorkshire, enveloping in flames the cities of Durham and York. Anon it would take a westward direction, leaving its red prints on Cumberland, and turning the waters of the Solway into blood. Again it would return eastward, and now it was the Humber which was darkened by the smoke of burning towns and villages. Old Simeon of Durham has painted the doleful spectacles with which the men of these parts were at that time familiar. The harvests, he tells us, were swept off, the trees were cut down, towns were given to the flames, and their inhabitants to the sword, and, saddest of all, bands of young men and young women were led away to become bondsmen and bondswomen to their Scotch captors. The outcome of this terrible strife was that the boundaries of the two kingdoms were fixed much as they had been before it began. The dividing line was drawn through Stanmore Moor, where a cross was set up, displaying on its sculptured face the arms of the two kings, and saying to each, "Hitherto your sceptre may be stretched, but not beyond."

William the Conqueror had now leisure to reflect how easily he had won England, and how completely baffled he had been in his attempts to make himself master of Scotland. Was there not more in this than mere valour could explain? When he thought of the brilliant success which had attended his arms in the one case, and the humiliating repulses they had suffered in the other, did it not occur to him that the Power to whom belongs the issues of battle does not always fight on the side of the "biggest battalion," and that arms are not the supreme Arbiter of the fate of kingdoms and monarchs? Whether William knew it or not, it is a truth most sure. We at this day can very clearly see what a misfortune it would have been to both kingdoms had William succeeded in subjecting the northern country to

his sway. We should indeed have had a larger England, but we should have had no Scotland. It may be said that a Scotland we should still have had, not as a distinct nationality, but as part and parcel of the greater country to be formed of the two. That is true: we should have had the mountains, and straths, and rivers of Scotland. The soil would not have been annihilated by its absorption into England; but the *spirit* of the Scots would. It is its spirit and not its acres that forms Scotland. Scotland could benefit England not otherwise than by preserving its Celtic fire, its Teuton doggedness, and its Norse bravery, and taking care that its keen love of independence and its philosophic mood of reflection should not die out. England needed such a neighbour to steady it, and be a balance to it in religion and politics. All these national characteristics would have been crushed out of Scotland by its subjection to the iron sway of William the Conqueror, and the loss would have been not less great to England than to the northern country itself.

The blame of these furious and bloody wars may, we think, be fairly meted out in equal proportions betwixt the English and the Scottish sovereign. These incursions had their initiative doubtless in ambition, but the originating motive was soon lost in the desire for retaliation and revenge which grew stronger with each new raid. The palm of victory can be claimed by neither. William rushed on the Scottish frontier to be broken by the shock, and Malcolm swept like a whirlwind into Northumbria to achieve only fruitless expeditions. We may say of both kings, they sowed toil and blood, and reaped a harvest of ashes. The praise of bravery—if bravery in such a contest can be called a virtue—must be awarded to the northern sovereign. It was a bold thing in the king of a little country like Malcolm to stand up against



a powerful conqueror like William of Normandy. The resources of the two men were very unequal. Having buried one host in the graveyard, which the Border counties had become, Malcolm could with difficulty raise another from the scattered villages and thinly populated glens and mountains of Scotland. William was more advantageously situated. With the rich and populous England at his back, with the plains of Normandy, the breeding-ground of armies, also to draw from, the English monarch could throw any number of men on the Scottish spear, knowing that if they were slaughtered, as so many hosts had been before them, he could quickly supply their place from the well-stocked recruiting fields—English and French—to which he had access.

Of the party now become guests in King Malcolm's palace, one in particular began to find special favour in the eyes of the gallant monarch. This was Margaret, the elder sister of Eadgar Aetheling. This royal lady brought with her to Malcolm's court the refinement and grace of the south, to which she added what neither courts nor climate can impart, sweetness of disposition and great goodness of heart. She possessed a vigorous understanding, a firm will, a sympathetic nature, and a graceful and copious eloquence. These endowments of mind and character made her stand out, doubtless, from the Scottish maidens of that day, who had not Margaret's opportunities of acquiring refinement and polish. Two centuries earlier Scotland could boast a deeper and richer civilisation than England. There was then a powerful principle of refinement at the heart of the Scottish nation, but the influence of the Culdee element had declined, and the ruggedness incident to the northern land had begun again to assert itself. From the day Margaret entered it there was a new light in the "forest tower" of Dunfermline, and a new brightness on the face of its royal master. Margaret became Malcolm Canmore's wife, and Queen of Scotland. The marriage drew after it most important consequences to the nation of the Scots.

We must spend a few moments in the contemplation of a woman who had so large a share in the moulding of the Scotland of the following centuries, and whose influence has not even yet perhaps quite passed away. Queen Margaret undoubtedly possessed great decision and elevation of soul. Standing between two eras she was representative of both, combining what was best in the one, with not a little of what was worst in the other. Pious she was, but not after the type of the Columban Church. She went for her ideals of devotion and her models of sanctity to the deserts of the

Thebaid rather than to the school of Columba and the "elders of Iona." Her religion was a rule to walk by, a formula to be observed, rather than an indwelling principle, spontaneously developing in a life of good works, and a character of evangelical virtue. Margaret did not take into account that right relations to God is the key to all right relations to man. Much of Margaret's worship consisted of that "bodily exercise which profiteth little." Every year she kept a literal fast of forty days before the advent of Easter, and another of equal length when Christmas came round. How much more easy is it to robe the body in sackcloth than the soul in penitence ! how much more easy to rend the garment than to rend the heart, to strike upon the breast than to break in pieces the idol enshrined within it !

In Margaret's creed *good works* held a higher place than "*faith*." We do not wonder that she mistook the right order of the two. It was the common error of her age. The teaching of Paul on the point had been lost, and Luther had not yet arrived to proclaim to Christendom that "it is not the good works which make the good man, but the good man that makes the good works." This truth we fear Margaret did not understand. She filled her life with beautiful and virtuous deeds. This must be acknowledged, unless indeed Bishop Turgot, her friend and confessor, has given us a romance pure and simple instead of a "*life*." Her biography, as it comes from his pen, is that of a perfect woman ! It is the life of one in whose character no imperfection existed, in whose soul no virtue was lacking, in whose deportment no blemish or fault ever was found ; it is the life of one who left no day without its deed of charity, and no hour without its act of piety. A beautiful picture if only it be true ! We ask—Is this a possible life ? It goes without saying that Bishop Turgot has not given us the real Mar-



garet. How then are we to judge of her? We shall take Malcolm Canmore's queen as Turgot has painted her, clothed in virtues as other queens in jewels, and see whether it be a fact that in this perfect character there is neither flaw nor fault. The radical defect in Queen Margaret's piety, we venture to think, is that it is faultless. She rises to Bishop Turgot's *ideal*, and doubtless also to her own, because that *ideal* is a low one. It is sensuous, not spiritual. The better half of her religion is an outside development, not the working of an inward principle. It is stiff and artificial. It has the musty odour of the religion of the Pharisee, and like his too, it is done before men. The impression it leaves is that of the good works making the good woman, to be followed of course by a reward to be counted not of grace but of debt.

To care for the widow and orphan as Margaret did, and to deal her bread to the hungry, were truly Christian acts, and sprang doubtless from that principle which is the source of all really good works. We cannot say the same, however, of some other services in which Queen Margaret showed great regularity and devotion, as, for instance, in her washing daily the feet of so many paupers or vagrants. "When the office of Mattins and Lauds was finished," says Turgot, "she, returning to her chamber, along with the king himself, washed the feet of six poor persons, and used to give them something wherewithal to relieve their poverty. It was the chamberlain's special duty to bring these poor people in every night before the queen's arrival, so that she might find them ready when she came to wait upon them."<sup>1</sup>

We like better the act with which Margaret began the day. It is more genuinely kind. "When it was morn-

<sup>1</sup> *Life of St Margaret, Queen of Scotland*, by Turgot, Bishop of St Andrews, translated from the Latin by William Forbes-Leith, S.J., p. 61. Edinburgh, 1884.

ing," says her biographer, "she rose from bed and devoted a considerable time to prayer and the reading of the Psalms, and while reading the Psalms she performed the following work of mercy. She ordered that nine little orphans utterly destitute should be brought in to her at the first hour of the day, and that some soft food, such as children at that tender age like, should daily be prepared for them." When these children had been duly fed, there followed the gathering of three hundred people into the royal hall, and when they had been seated at table, "the king on the one side," says Bishop Turgot, "and the queen on the other waited upon Christ in the person of His poor, and served them with food and drink." Queen Margaret was a punctual observer of "holy days," and passed their hours in the prescribed litanies of the "Holy Trinity," the "Holy Cross," and "Holy Mary," as also in the recital of the Psalter, and in the hearing of five or six masses. After these prolonged services she again "waited on twenty-four poor people, whom she fed."<sup>2</sup> Her fasts were frequent and very rigorous; in fact she weakened and ultimately broke her constitution by her abstinences.

There is much artificiality and toil in all this; but as regards the good accomplished, it comes to very little in the end. The power and grandeur of a life spring out of the principles on which it is founded. The man who plants at the foundation of society some great principle which is a permanent cure of its evils—some principle which regenerates the society as a whole, and not merely benefits a few of its members—is the real benefactor. Margaret's good deeds were local and temporary alleviations, not lasting reforms. They were a drop in the bucket of Scotland's necessities, and they were counterbalanced a hundredfold by the evil she initiated when she planted at the heart of the Scottish nation

<sup>1</sup> Turgot's *Life of St Margaret*, p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 63.



a principle which was at war with all the elevating forces which till her day had been acting on the country. She turned Scotland backwards.

By and by Margaret took in hand weightier matters than the distribution of the palace alms. She essayed to act the rôle of the national reformer. Scotland needed a reformation; it was the true idea. This alone would bring back the grand Scotland of the Columban age. Margaret might deal out alms to all the beggars in her husband's dominions. She might wash the feet of every vagrant in the kingdom: what better would Scotland be? The next day or the next year would bring more beggars and more vagrants. She was but rolling the stone of Sisyphus. What Scotland needed was to have its dying lamp relit, that the men who were stumbling in the dark might see where their happiness lay, and find their road to it. Margaret, in her mistaken zeal, was more likely to put that lamp out than rekindle it.

Nevertheless the Queen of Malcolm Canmore put her hand to the work of reforming the Scottish Church. We return to the council in the Palace of Dunfermline, convoked by her husband's orders, to "travail" in this matter. It was composed of a few Culdee pastors on the one side, and three English ecclesiastics on the other, chosen and despatched by Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, at Margaret's request.<sup>1</sup> The archbishop, himself a learned disputant, knew the right men to send on a mission of this sort, where a kingdom was to be won to the papal interest. The Queen came to the front in the debate, but as she could speak only Saxon, and the Culdees understood no language but Gaelic, Malcolm, who could speak both languages with equal facility, acted as interpreter. The conference lasted three

<sup>1</sup> Targot's *Life of St Margaret*, p. 44. Letter of Lanfranc to Queen Margaret. *Migne Patres Latini*, Sæc. xi. col. 549.



days. Margaret soon let it be seen that what she aimed at was a reformation on the model of Canterbury, that is of Rome. The restoration of the ancient Scottish Church was not what she desired. What she sought and hoped to accomplish was rather its overthrow, and the erection of a foreign ecclesiasticism in its room. "Observing," says Bishop Turgot, "that many practices existed among the Scottish nation which were contrary to the rule of the right faith, and the holy customs of the universal church, she caused frequent councils to be held, in order that by some means or other she might, through the gift of Christ, bring back into the way of truth those who had gone astray. Among these councils the most important is that in which for three days she, with a very few of her friends, combated the defenders of a perverse system with the sword of the Spirit, that is to say, with the Word of God. It seemed as if a second Helena were there present."<sup>1</sup>

As regards the points raised in the debate, Bishop Turgot gives with considerable fulness and force the defections charged upon the Columban clergy, but he omits to give with equal fulness their explanations and defences. He permits Queen Margaret and her Saxon assessors to be heard, but he shuts the mouths of the Culdee pastors, or affords them liberty of reply to only the extent of bowing assent. It may be very judicious in Bishop Turgot thus to enjoin silence upon one of the parties, but in a conference lasting for three days it is absurd to suppose that the spokesmen were all on the one side. Still the fact that a debate took place is itself a most important admission, as we shall immediately see.

The points raised were these: uniformity of rite, the Lenten fast, the observance of the Sabbath, the practice of marriage, the celebration of the eucharist, and the time of

<sup>1</sup> Turgot's *Life of St Margaret*, p. 44.

the observance of Easter. The Scottish Church and her clergy were charged on all these points, as being in error, and needing to be "brought back into the way of truth." Is not this a clear admission that the Columban Church in the end of the eleventh century still occupied separate ground from Rome? that she refused to receive the Roman laws and customs, and that she was not subject to the Roman jurisdiction, but on the contrary maintained her ancient independence? And does it not cut the ground from beneath the feet of those who assert that the Scottish Church by this time was, and had for some centuries previous, been one with the Church of Rome in doctrine and worship? Surely Queen Margaret would not have convoked a conference to bring about a union between two churches if they were already one and the same? A more decided proof there could not be of the *independence* and *anti-Romanism* of the Scottish Church of the eleventh century.

Let us look a little more closely at the points of difference betwixt the two churches as they were brought out in this discussion. The Queen opened the conference by insisting on uniformity of rite as essential to uniformity of doctrine. "All who serve God in one faith with the Catholic Church," said Margaret, "ought not to vary from that church by new or far-fetched usages."<sup>1</sup> No church has so often employed this argument, and no church has so often contradicted it by her example as the Roman Church. Within her pale an iron uniformity of rite has always existed with a boundless latitude of opinion. But the point to be noted here is that Margaret's remonstrance carries in it that neither in rite nor in faith did the Columban Church and the Roman Church agree.

The Queen next charged the Culdees with having fallen

<sup>1</sup> Turgot's *Life of St Margaret*, p. 45.

into grievous heterodoxy in the matter of the Lenten fast. "Our Lord fasted forty days," Margaret urged, "so does the Roman Church; but the Scots by refusing to fast on the Sabbaths in Lent, shorten their fast to thirty-six days." Margaret told them that they sinned in so abbreviating this fast. Margaret, if any one, had a right to call the Culdees to repent of this heinous transgression, seeing she herself was so very exemplary in the observance of the duty of fasting. According to Turgot, the pastors professed penitence and promised amendment.

We very much doubt the accuracy of Turgot's statement on this head. The historic presumption is against the bishop. The Culdee pastors were not likely to profess penitence or promise amendment in a matter in which they stood fully acquitted in the eyes of their Church. It is important to observe here that the Scottish Church followed the Eastern usages in their fasts and festivals, and by the ordinances of the Eastern Church all *fasts* were severely prohibited on Sabbath (Saturday) and the Lord's Day (Sunday).<sup>1</sup> Besides, "Fasting" was not the supremely meritorious observance in the eyes of the Culdees which it was in those of Queen Margaret. Even granting that they were not able to take full advantage of the liberty which the Gospel gives to Christians, especially in the matter of bodily mortifications and ceremonial observances, they would not have burdened their consciences, we are disposed to think, with a day more or a day less in the matter, or regarded themselves and their fellow church members as shut out of the kingdom of heaven because they fasted thirty-six days only instead of forty, in the holy season of Lent.

After this came up the question of the Culdee observance, or rather neglect, of the Lord's Day. "It was another

<sup>1</sup> *Cave's Primitive Christianity*, Part I., chap. vii. p. 175. Lond., 1672.



custom of theirs," says Turgot, "to neglect the reverence due to the Lord's Day by devoting themselves to every kind of worldly business upon it, just as they did upon other days."<sup>1</sup> It startles one to hear that the Columban clergy had sunk so low on this vital point. If they had turned the day of sacred rest into a day of ordinary labour: if they yoked the plough, worked the scythe, carried home the harvest, and did all their work on that day, as the words of Turgot appear to imply, they verily deserved the sharpest censure which Margaret could administer. The matter, however, is susceptible of a satisfactory explanation. The practices of the Eastern and Western Churches differed very considerably as regards the keeping of the Sabbath, or rather as regards the day observed by them as that of holy rest and worship. Saturday was the Sabbath or Holy Day of the Eastern Church: not indeed to the entire exclusion of the first day of the week, on which it was their custom to sing hymns and celebrate divine service. The Western Church observed the Lord's Day or Sunday. Britain, including Scotland, received its first evangelisation from the East, and it continued to follow generally the usages of the Eastern Church. The historian Socrates, speaking of the usual times of the public meeting of the members of the Eastern Church, calls the Sabbath and the Lord's Day, that is Saturday and Sunday, "the weekly festivals on which the congregation was wont to meet in the church for the performance of divine services."<sup>2</sup> In the early Irish Church we come on traces of this custom, that is, of the observance of Saturday as the day of weekly rest and worship. We find such traces also in the history of the Scottish Church.

<sup>1</sup> Turgot's *Life of St Margaret*, pp. 49, 50.

<sup>2</sup> *Hist. Eccl.*, Lib. vi., c. 8. See also Cave's *Primitives Christianity*, Part I., chap. vii.

A well-known instance is that of Columba, as related by Adamnan. Being come to his last day, he said this day is named the Sabbath, which means rest; and this day I shall enter into my rest. He died as he had foretold, on Saturday, at midnight. This aspect of the matter completely exonerates the Columban clergy from the rather serious accusation, for such it seems at the first blush, which Turgot preferred against them, and serves to bring out the fact that the Culdees claimed relationship with an older church than Rome.

The Roman Church followed the Western usage, that is, it observed, not the seventh but the first day of the week, the Lord's Day, the day of the resurrection, as the day of rest and holy worship. What Margaret wished was to get the Culdees to adopt this practice, and so break them into conformity with the Roman and Western Church.

The marriage customs of the Scots were next passed in review in this conference. Here again we are startled by the strong language of the Queen, as if the Scots were plunged in dreadful immoralities by their Culdeeism. "Next she proved," says Turgot, "how utterly abominable, yea more to be shunned by the faithful than death itself, was the unlawful marriage of a man with his stepmother, as also that the surviving brother should take to wife the widow of the deceased brother."<sup>1</sup> We have here another link betwixt the Culdees and the East, and another proof that the Christianity of the Scots did not come to them by way of Rome. It was enjoined in the Old Testament, in certain circumstances, that a man should marry the widow of his deceased brother. It is for this the Scots are here blamed. Their real offence, we are persuaded, consisted in their opposition to the marriage law of Rome. The Church of Rome was enlarging her code of "prohibited degrees;" she was changing

<sup>1</sup> Turgot's *Life of St Margaret*, p. 57.

marriage into a sacrament, and declaring all marriages unlawful which were not so solemnised; in short, she was employing marriage as an instrument for the enslavement of society, and in the charges thrown out against the Scots on this head we trace another attempt on the part of Rome to bring them to submit to her yoke.

The purity of the Scots is borne witness to by Alcuin, an English writer of the ninth century. "The Scots," says he, "are said to lead a most chaste life, amid their worldly occupations, by rational consideration. But it is said that none of their laity make confession to priests, whom we believe to have received from Christ our God the power of binding and loosing together with the holy apostles."<sup>1</sup> And still more significant, as regards the alleged contempt of marriage by the Irish and Scottish Christians, is what is said in the *Life of Malachy*, in the twelfth century. "The most wholesome use of confession," says he, "the sacrament of confirmation, and the *contract of marriage*," by which St Malachy means the *Roman sacrament of marriage*, "all which they before were either ignorant of or did neglect, Malachy did institute afresh."<sup>2</sup>

To understand that the Scots did not observe the ordinance of marriage is to contradict all Scottish history, though Giraldus Cambrensis has so represented the matter. And even Lanfranc and Anselm have preferred this same accusation, which is as absurd as it is calumnious. Sedulius reckons marriage among those things that "are gifts but not spiritual."<sup>3</sup> The Church of Rome, however, knows nothing of such marriages.

Finally came up the supreme question of the eucharist.

<sup>1</sup> Alcuin, Epist., 26. *Usher citante.*

<sup>2</sup> Bernard's *Life of Malachy*, c. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Sedul. on Romans, chap. i. *Quod datum quidem sit, non tamen spirituale, ut nuptiæ.*



The sacrament of the Supper in the church of the West had long ceased to be the simple commemorative ordinance which it is seen at its first celebration in the upper chamber at Jerusalem; but neither had it as yet grown into that ceremonial of pomp and mystery which it was one day to become, and to which it was rapidly approximating. Nothing would have so delighted Margaret as to banish the simple Culdee "Supper," and replace it with the operatic splendour of the Roman eucharist, because nothing would so conclusively seal the submission of the Scots to the authority of Rome. This was the heart of the controversy. Here must the great blow be struck.

"The Queen," says Turgot, "now raised another point; she asked them to explain why it was that on the festival of Easter they neglected to receive the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, according to the usage of the Holy and Apostolic Church?" The answer of the Culdees, as Bishop Turgot has reported it, was that they felt their unworthiness so deeply that they feared to "approach that mystery." This cannot have been their whole answer, for every one sees that this sense of unworthiness would have kept them away from the holy table not only *on* Easter day, but on all days and in all places. Now we know that the Culdees celebrated the eucharist in their own churches, and kept Easter after their own reckoning. Nay, it was made matter of accusation against them at an after stage of this same controversy, that they did celebrate this sacrament, although in a way displeasing to Margaret, because not "according to the usage of the Holy and Apostolic Church."

What, then, was the point of the accusation brought against the Culdee clergy, and what was the real attitude taken up by them on the question of the eucharist in this controversy?

Turgot's report has brought out neither. The accusation

was not that they neglected observance of the sacrament of the Supper. Their opponents knew that this they did not do. The accusation was that they refused to join in the celebration of the eucharist at the Roman altars on Easter day. Why? They "feared," they said, to "approach that mystery," that is, they feared to approach those communion tables on which the "Supper" had become the sacrament of the "Body and Blood" of Christ in another sense than that of its institution. Innocent III. had not yet enacted the dogma of transubstantiation, but after two centuries of discussion the belief of that mystery had worked itself into the general mind of the Roman world, and the Culdees hesitated to compromise their own faith or hurt their consciences by joining in this festival with those who believed that to be the literal flesh and blood of Christ which they knew to be only bread and wine. Therefore it was they eschewed the eucharistic table of Queen Margaret's church.

If the Culdees "feared" the "mystery" presented on the altars of Margaret, the Queen in her turn was shocked at the bald simplicity of the "Supper" as seen on the Culdee communion tables. "There were certain places in Scotland," says Bishop Turgot, that is, there were Culdee chapels and cells, "in which masses were celebrated according to some sort of barbarous rite contrary to the usage of the whole church."<sup>1</sup> The Bishop does not say what these "barbarous rites" were, but we can have no difficulty in guessing. They were the wooden communion tables of the Culdees: they were the vessels of home manufacture used in the celebration of the Supper, and the ordinary woollen dress of the officiating Culdee pastor. These all "were contrary to the usage of the whole church," therefore "barbarous." The same charge might have been brought against the first Supper in

<sup>1</sup> Turgot's *Life of St Margaret*. v. 42



the upper chamber at Jerusalem. "Fired by the zeal of God," says the Bishop, "the Queen attempted to root out and abolish this custom, so that henceforth, from the whole of Scotland, there was not one single person who dared to continue the practice." We must here understand the good Bishop as stating what he earnestly desired or fondly hoped would happen as the result of this debate, rather than affirming what he knew to be the fact. It is perfectly known to us, and could not but be known to Bishop Turgot, had he taken any pains to inform himself, that the Scottish Culdees, in many instances at least, still kept their eucharist after the "barbarous" formula of their church, and did so for two hundred years after all the persons who figure in this conference had gone to their graves.

Let us illustrate this point by a side light. The Irish Culdees of the twelfth century are painted in even more odious colours than the Scots of the eleventh, and it helps us to determine what weight to attach to the charges against the latter to find that the former are accused of being plunged in the same barbarity and impiety with the Scots, simply because they preferred the apostolic usages of the primitive church to the Roman inventions of later times. St Bernard, speaking of the Reformation set on foot by Malachy when he became Bishop of Connor, says, "Then this man of God felt that he was appointed not over *men* but over *beasts*. Never before had he met with men in such *barbarity*; never before had he found men so stubborn against morals, so deadly to rites, so impious against faith, so savage to laws, so stiff-necked against discipline; Christians in name, pagans in reality. Not one could be found who would pay tithes or first-fruits; make confessions; ask for penances, or give them; or *contract lawful marriages*. What was the champion of God now to do?



. . . At length, however, the fierceness yields, the *barbarism* begins to give way; *savage rites* are done away, and the Roman rites are introduced; the usages of the church are everywhere received, the sacraments are duly celebrated, confessions are made, *concubinage* disappears; and in short, all things are so changed for the better that, to-day, we may well say of that nation, "Those which in time past were not a people are now the people of God."<sup>1</sup> This is conclusive as regards the *barbarity* of which the Scotch and Irish churches of that age were accused. That barbarity consisted in their scriptural simplicity. Their accusers, who saw nothing barbarous in transubstantiation, with all that is implied in it, were shocked to see the Supper administered in the simple elements of bread and wine. In their eyes no barbarism was equal to this.

This conference in the royal palace of Dunfermline was emphatically the "hour of temptation" to Scotland and her Church. Whether shall the faith of Iona or the authority of Rome henceforth govern the land? Shall Scotland forget her past? Shall she say that Columba was an impostor? that the glory of Iona was an illusion and a mockery, and that only now had the true light risen upon the Scots? This was the question to which Scotland was invited to return an answer in the royal chamber at Dunfermline. All that royal authority, queenly blandishment, ecclesiastical prestige, and trained dialectic skill could do to overawe the Culdee pastors and influence their decision was done. To abide by Iona was to incur the frown of power, and invite a future dark with persecution. To go over to Rome was to open the road to preferment and honour. The temptation in Eden seemed to have renewed itself in the conference chamber of Dunfermline. The Culdees had been led, as it

<sup>1</sup> Bernard's *Life of Malinche*, chap. viii.

were, into a garden in which grew all manner of fruits pleasant to the eye and sweet to the taste of ambitious ecclesiastics. They were shown in prospect, dignities, titles, princedoms, bishoprics, emoluments, in short, all the golden fruits which adorn the trees that flourish on the Seven Hills, and drink of the waters of the Tiber. What fascination and enchantment must the goodly show now summoned up before their eyes have possessed for these unsophisticated pastors, "these dwellers beyond the bounds of the habitable world!" They were invited to pluck and eat, and were assured that in the day that they did so, their eyes would be opened, and they would understand all mysteries and be replenished with celestial potencies and heavenly graces. The Temptress was a queen. We see her hold out the golden apple. Will the Culdees accept it? When the curtain falls on the scene, the religion of Rome is seen to be that of the Scottish court, but not as yet that of the Scottish nation.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### GLIMPSES OF THE COLUMBAN CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES—EASTER CONTROVERSY—FALL OF IONA.

To trace a continuity of action and influence on the part of the Church of Columba from the days of its founder to the period of the Reformation is a labour specially inviting, but it is one the difficulty of which is at least equal to its interest. The traces which that Church has left in the written records of the land in which it flourished and which it redeemed from barbarism are faint, and sometimes they are not even discernible. It is invasion and war that come to the front, and the religion of the early Scotland falls into the background. The expert and industrious scribes which flourished in the sixth and two following centuries do not appear to have occupied themselves much with contemporary history. They did not foresee, or if they foresaw they did not take means to satisfy, the intense desire their sons of a later day would feel to know what sort of country Scotland was in respect of its church ordinances and its family religion ten or twelve centuries before they opened their eyes upon it. These men were too busy transcribing copies of the word of God for the instruction of their flocks and the evangelisation of their nation—for every monastery had its scriptorium—to devote much time to what did not bear upon the great and special work of their day. And when the time came that the places of the Columban scribes were taken by another and very different class of penmen—writers



who knew little of Columba, and did not care to remember the benefits he had conferred on Scotland—the past was permitted to drop out of the minds of men. Hence it has come to pass that from the end of the eleventh century till the opening of the sixteenth ecclesiastical Scotland, that is, in the Columban and evangelical sense, is comparatively a blank.

Still it does not admit of a moment's doubt that the great Missionary Institute planted by Columba in the middle of the sixth century (563), and which we find spoken of for the first time in the reign of King Gregory (about 880) as the "Scottish Church" kept its footing in the land, in the midst of rebellious mormaers and ravaging vikings, alleviating the miseries it could not prevent, and from its hidden seat at the foundation of the Scottish nationality, sending forth from century to century a perennial stream of civilising influence, which did more to cement the nation into one, than either the union of its blood, or the union of its arms, and which to its individual men was a purifying faith in life, and a sure hope in death; whether it chanced that their last moments were passed on the bed of peace, or, as too often happened, on the field of battle. As we traverse the centuries that intervene betwixt the union of the Picts and Scots and the reign of Malcolm Canmore, and again those that divide the reign of Malcolm from that of James V., we light at intervals on the historic traces of the ancient Scottish Church, and find her, whether existing in an organised form, as during the first of the two periods we have mentioned, or broken into little communities, and simply tolerated, as during the second period, still resting on her old foundations, and maintaining undeviatingly an attitude of protest against Rome. Shut up in the cloisters of St Andrews and Lochleven, or in places more remote

and obscure, stript of lands and made pensionaries on the royal bounty, these solitary Columbites nevertheless refused to be folded in the church which Queen Margaret had set up, and which had its head on the Seven Hills. They, on the contrary, gloried to trace up their descent to that venerable church which had its cradle in Iona. Let us construct the historic line so far as the meagre materials at our service put it in our power to do so.

The golden age of the Columban Church in Scotland extends from the middle of the sixth to the end of the seventh century. These one hundred and fifty years were eminently the formative period of the Scottish nation. They put that ineffaceable stamp upon its character and destinies which the following centuries only helped to develop or to deepen, and which the nation still retains. The events that made that period famous were notable indeed. They were the founding of the great mission school of Iona; the establishment of the national independence of the Scots; the conversion of the northern Picts to Christianity; and the planting of branch houses of the Columbite Institute throughout the country, so as to effect a permeation, more or less complete, of the whole land with civilising and Christianising influences. There is perhaps no period of equal duration in our country's history that witnessed so immense and so beneficial a change in its condition as this century and a half saw effected upon it. It found the Scots in comparative barbarism, it left them in the enjoyment of the light of letters and the higher blessings of religion. Moreover, it fired its sons with a zeal which sent them forth in crowds into distant lands to spread the knowledge of the Word of God and the fame of that country which was doing so much to circulate it among the nations of northern Europe. With such brightness shone the early day of the Church of Iona.

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over Iona. One, Duncadh by name, was a descendant of Conall Gulban, the tribe to which Columba belonged. The other was from a line with which the founder of the abbacy had no connection, and in which till now no abbot had arisen. We cannot explain this on any other supposition than that of a schism in Iona, occasioned by the attempt of Adamnan to introduce Roman customs into the brotherhood. There were plainly two parties, each with an abbot at its head: a Romanising party, and a party that still adhered to the old traditions of their church, that is, to the rule and theology of Columba. This dual government continued till Iona finally fell.

The next calamitous event in the history of the Columban Church was the perversion of Nectan or Naiton, King of the Picts, in the year 710. Naiton, enlightened by letters sent him by the Abbot of Jarrow, Northumbria, saw that he and his nation had been in grievous error on the question of Easter. They had all along been celebrating the festival of our Lord's resurrection on the wrong day. He saw, too, that this great national transgression was aggravated by the heterodox tonsure in use among his clergy. They shaved their heads as Columba and his brethren had shorn theirs, that is from ear to ear across the forehead, and not on the crown, as Rome exacted of her priests. The monarch issued immediate orders for a reformation on both points. In his dominions Easter must not be celebrated save according to the Roman reckoning, nor must cleric be seen with head shorn otherwise than after the Roman pattern. So did Naiton command. The decree had this good effect: it brought out the fidelity and the courage of the Columban pastors in the region of the Picts. The compliances required of them were not difficult: these might even with some show of reason be held to be of small significance, they involved no abandon-

ment of any principle of creed, only a change of outward rite. The northern clergy might have sheltered themselves under the example of Adamnan, who had prevailed on some of the brethren in the parent institution of Iona to fall in with these customs. They might say we may surely do at the bidding of our king what these others have done at the bidding of their abbot. But no, the Pictish clergy took a different and much more serious view of the matter. They regarded compliance with the royal decree as an abandonment of their ancient traditions, and a surrender of the position they had occupied as protesters against a church which was becoming arrogant in proportion as she was becoming corrupt, and they resolved, rather than be guilty of conduct so unworthy and dishonourable, to brave the penalty of disobeying the royal command. That penalty was expulsion from the dominions of Naiton. The whole body of the northern clergy were driven across Drumalban by the king, and took up their abode in the territories of the Scots.<sup>1</sup>

No details are given us of this great exodus. Our historians do not seem to have discovered its importance, and they have dismissed it with a simple mention of the bare fact. It appears to us, on the contrary, to let in a flood of light on the state of the Scottish church and nation in the eighth century. It is one of the most significant, as it is undoubtedly one of the noblest epochs in the history of our early church. We witness with admiring surprise and profound thankfulness this grand sacrifice to conscience. We read in it a strength of principle, a devotion to duty, and a readiness to do battle for the cause of truth, which attest the continued presence in the Church of Columba of a vigorous

<sup>1</sup> *Chron. Picts and Scots*, p. 74. ; A.D. 717. *Expulsio familiæ Ie trans dorsum Britannię a Nectono rege.* Skene's *Celtic Scotland*, vol. ii. pp. 177, 178.



life, and a spirit of martyrdom. And farther, we can reason from the disinterestedness and devotion of the pastors to the piety and knowledge of the flocks which they fed. In the humble huts of the common people, whatever the lives led in the hall of mormaer, there must have been many beautiful examples of piety and virtue.

Though no details have been given, we can imagine the privations, the sacrifices, and the suffering which were necessarily attendant on an enforced banishment on a scale so large. The monastic fabrics—the houses, chapels, schools, which the first Columbite pastors who settled in these parts had reared with their own hands, the fields around their establishments reclaimed from the desert by their diligent cultivation, the youth who had grown up under their eye, and whom they had instructed in a knowledge of letters, the flocks whom they tenderly loved, the graveyards where those whom they had led into the way of life slept in hope of a better resurrection, from all these the persecuting edict of King Naiton forcibly parted them. The pain of leaving so many loved objects was followed by the hardships incident to forming new settlements in a distant and less hospitable part of the country. The more we reflect on what we now see taking place in Scotland, the more are we convinced that the Church of Columba was still a power in the land, and had yet some centuries of usefulness before it. A church capable of such an act of heroism deserved the love and doubtless received the reverence of the population.

The arrival of the northern Columbite exiles amid the western mountains of the Scots must have helped to strengthen the hands of those who in the territories lying to the west of Drumlban were seeking to stand on “the old paths.” But their exodus must have sadly tended to the spiritual impoverishment of the northern and eastern por-



tions of Scotland. We are not told to whom the deserted flocks turned for instruction after their pastors were driven across Drumalban. Possibly Naiton sent them clerics whose heads were shorn after the approved fashion if their qualifications were but slender. He might find such among the southern Picts, where Adamnan had founded some monasteries on a laxer basis, and where it is to be presumed his influence and spirit were more felt than in the territory of the northern Picts, which was the chief seat of the oldest Columban houses. The lands which had belonged to the exiled clergy would be seized by laymen, and their spiritual duties would be assigned to clerics who had conformed. This was what had taken place in a previous case of expulsion, but on a smaller scale. When the missionaries of Iona were expelled from Lindisferne, about eighty years before, their temporal possessions were appropriated by laymen who thrust in ignorant and immoral priests in their room, and the consequence was, as Bede informs us, an outbreak of frightful disorders in the abbey and convents of Northumbria.<sup>1</sup> If we had had a Bede among the northern Picts to tell us what happened after the expulsion of the Columban clergy, in all probability we should have had the sad picture of Northumbria presented to us over again. We should have read of the ignorance and immorality, the careless shepherds and the famished flocks, which began henceforth to overspread Pictavia.

This we know, that civil confusions and troubles were immediately consequent upon the expatriation of the clergy by Naiton. There had been peace betwixt Pict and Scot for a century. The sword was sheathed when the conversion of the northern Picts by Columba made the two nations of one faith. But now came "war in the gates;" fierce

<sup>1</sup> Bede, *Hist.*, i. 195.

battle began again to rage betwixt Pict and Scot, and the strife went on till the union of the two nations took place, when the sword was again returned to its scabbard, and the descendants of the Columban clergy who had been driven out by Naiton were invited to recross Drumalban, and resume their functions in what had been Pictavia, but was now Scotland.

We must turn for a few moments to another matter. The controversy respecting Easter is one of the more famous in ecclesiastical history. It was eminently one of the battle-grounds betwixt the Eastern and Western Churches in the early centuries. The controversy reached Scotland in the eighth century, having been brought hither by the Romanizers from Canterbury, who wished to impose their mode of celebration upon the Columban clergy. It was the door by which the followers of Columba would enter the great Western Church. But as the majority of the Columbites had no desire to be included in that pale, or to have any close connection with the Roman bishop, they declined compliance with a rite which was universally interpreted as a badge of Roman servitude. The controversy was therefore as hotly waged almost in Scotland as in the churches of Asia and Europe. It is necessary we should understand a little of the merits of this question.

All Christians commemorate the resurrection of our Lord when they observe the Sabbath or first day of the week as a day of sacred rest and holy worship. Many Christians account that, in the observance of the weekly Sabbath, they discharge all the obligations laid upon them in this matter in the New Testament. But since the second century the Church, in addition to this weekly celebration, has commemorated the resurrection of our Lord in a grand annual festival, after the example of the Jews, who kept



their passover once a year, in commemoration of their birth as a nation in their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. It was judged decorous that this festival should be observed by all Christian churches throughout the world on the same day. It was at this point that division and strife entered. The Eastern Church kept Easter on the same day on which the Jews had celebrated the passover; that is, they kept it on the fourteenth day of the first moon after the vernal equinox, even though that day should be an ordinary week-day. The Western Church, on the other hand, observed Easter on a Sabbath, or first day of the week, that being the day on which our Lord rose, and never on a week-day. The first Sabbath after the fourteenth day of the vernal or paschal moon was the day of Western observance. The Eastern Church pleaded the example of the Jews, who kept the passover only on the fourteenth of the month Nisan, but the Western Church refused the authority of that example, and denounced the oriental Christians for celebrating the resurrection on what they deemed the wrong day, as almost as heinous offenders as if they had denied the fact of the resurrection altogether. Conferences were held betwixt the Eastern and Western Churches, embassies were exchanged, excommunications were threatened, but the scandal of two different celebrations was not removed. The war went on till Constantine ascended the throne, and got a decree passed in the Council of Nicea, ordaining that henceforth Easter should be observed East and West only on a Sabbath, or first day of the week.<sup>1</sup>

Even yet perfect conformity was not attained. A new point emerged, which continued for some centuries to agitate all Christendom, and baffle all attempts to find a basis of adjustment. The authority of the Council of Nicea could

<sup>1</sup> Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.*, i. 9; Eusebius, *Vita Const.*, iii. 17.



not control the laws that regulate the "times and seasons," and make them work in harmony with their decree. It required no great knowledge of the motions of the heavenly bodies to perceive that only once in a long cycle of years would the anniversary of our Lord's resurrection fall on precisely the same day; and unless the "time" of Easter was made moveable, according to a rule, in exact correspondence with the planetary laws, Christians, whether in the East or in the West, could not have the satisfaction of thinking that oftener than once or twice in their lifetime it was in their power to celebrate Easter on the true day, and enjoy the fulness of its orthodox benefits. It might happen to them to be right once in a cycle of nineteen years, or once in a cycle of eighty-four years, but more they dared not hope for. How was the rule to be determined by which the churches were to walk? What cycle of years must elapse before the Easter full moon would fall on the same day?

The astronomical science at the service of the age was hardly sufficient to enable the men of that time to answer this question. Nevertheless, repeated attempts were made to discover a cycle which should remove all discrepancies and unite the Church East and West in a grand celebration, that should remove for ever this scandal. The Church of Rome thought she had discovered the basis of correct paschal celebration in a cycle of eighty-four years. She followed this computation down to the sixth century. She found, however, after this long observance, that after all she was in error. The moons would not revolve according to her canon as they ought and would have done had her canon been infallibly accurate. But it was not infallibly accurate. The council which decreed the infallibility was as yet thirteen centuries below the ho-

tions of the Eastern and Western Churches were not harmonised, nor the war betwixt them ended. Victor of Aquitane next approached the problem. He made trial of his skill in reconciling the Roman and Alexandrine methods of computation. He came nearer the mark than any of his predecessors, but even his canon of the paschal moons did not extinguish all discrepancies, nor reconcile the two churches. A solution, however, was not despaired of. In the year 567 Dionysius the Less drew up a paschal table on the basis of a nineteen years' cycle, which had the merit of extinguishing all inaccuracies and discrepancies. It was accepted by Rome and the churches of the East, and from this time the war languished and finally expired, and now was seen the imposing spectacle of all Christians throughout the world keeping the festival of Easter on the same day, and bearing united testimony to the great fact of the Resurrection of our Lord—the cornerstone of Christianity.

But there were certain benighted or obstinate men in the heretical North who still clung to their old customs, and walked contrary in this matter to the universal Church. The Scots had received their Christianity from the East, and along with it the "time" of Easter celebration. They were Quartodecimans, as the phrase was, that is, Fourteenth-day men. Their practices corresponded with the Paschal table of Anatolius, Bishop of Laodicea in Syria, who had, in the year 277, drawn up a canon on the basis of the nineteen years cycle in which the 19th March was considered as the vernal equinox.<sup>1</sup> But this displeased that Church which now called herself the "mother and mistress of all Churches." She could not tolerate the

<sup>1</sup>Belleaheim's *History of the Catholic Church of Scotland*, vol. i. 135  
1887.



slightest deviation from her own practice, and accordingly sent, as we have seen, her agents to the Scots, with her "scissors" in the one hand, and her "paschal tables" in the other, to impose upon them uniformity. Possibly the Columban clergy would not have offered any very stout resistance to either the new "tonsure" or the new "Easter" had it not been for the sense which Rome put upon these matters. They were the symbols of submission, and therefore the "elders" of the Scots would not permit Rome to shear their heads, or to dictate to them in the matter of Easter. They had been free till now, and they would maintain their freedom. The battle betwixt Iona and Rome had come to centre here. These were the two articles of the rising or falling of the Columban Church. We have seen Colman, whom Bede acknowledges to have been "a great bishop, and an eloquent preacher," demit his office as abbot of Lindisferne, and his brother evangelists quit their mission-fields in Northumbria rather than submit to these compromising customs. Rome followed them into their own country only to meet a like rebuff. When she issued her commands through King Naiton, we have seen the Pictish clergy rise up in a body and leave their country rather than own Rome as their mistress. When Adamnan sought to draw the elders of Iona into these new paths, they at once repudiated his proposals, and disowned him as their abbot. When Egbert in 717 visited Iona on a like errand, hiding his dishonest purpose under a great show of sanctity, he prevailed, it is true, on the inmates of the monastery who had come to fill the places once occupied by worthier men, to conform to the Roman Easter, and, in two years after, to receive the coronal or Roman tonsure. Thus the paschal tables and the scissors of the Pope triumphed in the parent institution, but the victory here was of small account.



The sceptre had departed from Iona before these degenerate "elders" did obeisance to the Roman Bishop. Iona was no longer the guiding and governing power it had been in the sixth and seventh centuries. The real Iona—the life, the piety, the independence which the symbolic term "Iona" expressed—had passed over to the daughter institutions on the mainland, which stood upright when the parent institution fell. Iona was now a house divided against itself; it had two abbots, as Rome at times had two popes. The din of dissension was oftener heard within it than the chant of psalm. It sought to serve two masters by mingling the traditions of Columba with the customs of the Pope. It dragged out an unhonoured existence till the end of the century. Its abbots followed each other rapidly to the grave. Popish historians have toiled to discover and record their names. It is a fruitless labour in which we shall not follow them. Scotland owes these men nothing, and is willing to forget them. While the parent institution had become like a tree whose sap is dried up and whose leaf is withered, the branches that had shot out from it in its flourishing age were spreading wide and far over the kingdoms. In what land of northern Europe were the Culdee missionaries at that time not to be met with? Iona, the true Iona, was not the monastery, or the island, or the little company of "elders" now wearing the Roman tonsure; it was that great army of preachers who were traversing France, and Germany, and the Rhine provinces, and invading even Italy, and maintaining a great and successful war against the pagan darkness from which certain of these countries had not yet emerged, as also against the papal darkness which was creeping over others. In giving this army of evangelists to Christendom, what a mighty service had Iona rendered to the world! For this end had Iona

been raised up. Its work was now accomplished. Corruption had now seized upon the parent stock; and if it had become unsightly, and leafless, and had ceased to produce, who that remembered Columba, and the "elders" of Iona's golden age, but would have said, "Let that defunct institution be removed from the sight of men." The fiat went forth to cut down the barren tree. Across the sea came the Viking to execute this sentence. He did so in cruel fashion as his manner was.

In 795 the Danes fell upon Iona and devastated it. In 802 their hordes returned, and it was burned to the ground. It was the original wooden monastery which Columba and his twelve companions had reared on their first arrival in the island that was now given to the flames. Four years later (806) the Danes paid Iona another visit and dealt it its final blow.<sup>1</sup> On this occasion its whole community was put to the sword, and Abbot Cellach alone escaped to tell the people of Ireland that the famous monastery of Columba was fallen, was fallen, and now was nothing more than a heap of ashes.

<sup>1</sup> *Annals of Ulster*, Ann. 806. "Familia Iæ occisa est a gentibus."

## CHAPTER XIV.

TRANSLATIONS OF THE CHAIR OF COLUMBA—THE ONE  
BISHOP OF ALBAN—A GREAT TEMPEST IN WHICH  
SCOTLAND DOES NOT SINK.

IONA has fallen, and yet Iona lives and flourishes. The great evangelical work inaugurated by Columba goes on despite the defection of the fathers of the monastery, and the devastation accomplished by the fire and sword of the Danes. The power of the latter to destroy extends no farther than to the material fabric of Iona; they have no power over the grand missionary spirit which that fabric enshrined. That spirit is not tied to this or to any spot of earth. If it shall continue to linger round the grave of Columba, and haunt the scene of his earthly footsteps, it will by and by become a fetish, and draw men into the debasing worship of material objects and dead men's bones. It is better that it should be set free from temples and tombs, that it may be able to put forth its mighty expansive force, and show that its power is wholly spiritual, and not dependent upon any man however holy, or any spot of earth however sacred. The tendency of the age was to connect holiness with certain men and certain things. That tendency was growing stronger every century. The fire and sword of the Dane came to counteract that tendency. The remedy was a drastic but a much needed one, though we fear it was but little appreciated by the men of that day.

\*\*\*e have come to the ninth century, but we have not come



to the close of the career of the Columban Church. Her footprints are still distinctly traceable. She is still a powerful organisation, despite the troops of Romanisers which from across the Tweed are invading the country and laying siege to Iona. At home we see her struggling to maintain her ancient independence and preserve the scriptural faith of her people in the face of hostile edicts and of many painful sacrifices. On the continent of Europe we behold her putting forth still mightier efforts, as if resolved by her foreign conquests to compensate for the losses and defeats she is beginning to experience at home. We see her spreading the light over vast areas, combating the darkness all round, civilising barbarous tribes, permitting neither the inhospitable plain nor the stormy ocean to turn back her steps, and pushing on into the lands of the Viking, and taking revenge for his many bloody raids into her own native country by enriching the lands under his sway with the blessings of the gospel.

This untiring and hopeful energy on the part of the Columban Church has been certified to us by many concurring testimonies. No small portion of the evidence that attests the continued action of the Columban Church has been supplied by Rome herself, and it is perhaps not the least convincing and conclusive portion of it. Against what society is it that the Rome of that day enacts her decrees and fulminates her excommunications? Is it not against the Church of Columba, with her missionaries and her customs so diverse from that of Rome? Either Rome imposed upon the men of that day when she directed her councils to promulgate these edicts, or she now imposes upon us when she would have us believe that at the period when these edicts were concocted and fulminated the Columban Church had sunk into insignificance and

from the stage. If, as has of late been repeatedly and boldly asserted, it was a fact that the Columban Church by this time had the locks of her strength shorn, and was giving signs of speedily disappearing from view altogether, would Rome have given herself so much concern and trouble about her? Would she not have seen that her true policy was to permit her great rival and antagonist to quit the field without observation, and pass out of the remembrance of the world? Her fears would not permit the Roman Church to maintain this prudent silence. She must be perpetually thundering against the Columbites, repudiating the orders of their clergy, denying the efficacy of their sacraments, and by this course of procedure drawing deep and broad the line of distinction and separation betwixt herself, so genuinely apostolic, and this body, which followed perverse customs and was cut off from Peter. Do we not find Rome expelling them from the kingdoms where she was dominant, in short, taking every means in her power to make it plain that she was sensible of the life and vigour that still existed in the Church of Columba, and that, while affecting to despise, she in reality hated that Church as a rival, and dreaded her as a foe. This attitude on the part of Rome towards the Columban Church is sufficient proof of its continued organization and influence. It is an attitude of antagonism in both doctrine and rite. Rome distinctly tells her northern rival, "Your faith is not my faith, nor is your worship my worship."

It was a long way from the shores of Iona in the western sea to Chalons-sur-Saone in France. But long as the way was, it was often trodden by the foot of Culdee missionary. We have this fact under the hand of a council of Romish ecclesiastics which met in that city in the year 813. Among  
er matters the question of the orders of the Scottish

missionaries came up for discussion. The decision of the council was that these orders were invalid on the ground that they had no metropolitan, and that it was unknown through whom their orders had been derived. The council had no assurance of their having come through a Roman channel, and they could recognise no other as apostolic.

It would seem at first sight as if a council sitting at Chalons-sur-Saone went out of its way to deal with this matter. Yet a moment's reflection will show that the question was one that deeply concerned its members. The Culdee evangelists had, for nearly two centuries, been busily at work in France. They had planted stations on the banks of the Clain beside Poitiers, and now they had appeared on the banks of the Saone, and were making numerous conversions. It was this that alarmed the fathers now assembled in the city which is washed by the Saone. Their flocks were in danger, and they could not do less than warn them against the heretical doctrines and spurious sacraments of the men on whose heads had never come the hands of Roman Bishop nor the scissors of Roman pontiff.<sup>1</sup>

We meet a like occurrence three years later. In 816 a council of Anglo-Saxon bishops was held at Celcyth, south of the Humber. The English council follows in the wake of the French one. They repudiate the orders of the Scottish clergy, and interdict them from administering the sacraments or performing any priestly act in England.<sup>2</sup> The Columban clergy were just as unwilling to claim relationship with the Romans as the Roman ecclesiastics were to own connection with the Columbans. This mutual antipathy came out in rather a curious way at an earlier period. In 604, Bishops

<sup>1</sup> Wilkins, *Concilia*, i. 170. "Incertum est nobis unde et an aliquo ordinenter." Vide "Scottish Nation," vol. ii. 338, 339.

<sup>2</sup> Labbe, *Concilia*, vii. 1281.



Laurentius, Mellitus, and Justus were deputed by the Pope to visit Britain. They expected to find there a people that walked in the ways of the universal Church. On arriving in England, however, they were mortified to discover that the Britons did not come up to the expectations they had formed of them. But they comforted themselves with the thought that they would find the Scots, who had a high repute for sanctity, more observant of the Roman customs. They found, on the contrary, as we learn from Bede, that they had made a second and greater mistake.<sup>1</sup> The missionary from Iona, Daganus, would not eat at the same table with the Pope's bishops, nor sit in the same apartment with them. The farther northward they journeyed the stronger they found this mutual repugnance and aversion, and the broader the separation betwixt the disciples of Iona and the partisans of Rome. The instinct of both parties kept them apart. They refused to amalgamate.

Even in the thick darkness that shrouds Scotland at the beginning of the ninth century, the Church of Columba does not pass wholly out of sight. We feel her influence and action even when we cannot see her. We have seen how the Columban clergy were expelled from the dominions of the Picts in the previous century, for refusing obedience to King Naiton's decree enjoining upon them conformity to Rome. Subsequent events show that their expulsion was resented by the people, and that the measure was unpopular. A few years after, King Naiton was driven from his throne. We have a yet more decisive proof that the hearts of the people went with their religious instructors, now sent into banishment, and that they continued to cherish the hope of their recall. When Kenneth Macalpin ascended the throne of the united nation, one of his first acts was to bring

<sup>1</sup> Bede, *Hist. Eccles.*, ii. 4.

back the Columban pastors—that is, the descendants of the men who had been driven out—and restore them to their old position in the Pictish territories. The policy of Kenneth was dictated obviously by the hope of strengthening himself with his new subjects. He appears also to have taken steps to revive the Columban houses in Lothian, originally founded by evangelists from Iona, but latterly fallen into decay owing partly to the wars with England, and partly to the ascendancy of the Roman Church in Northumbria.<sup>1</sup> We see in these measures a tribute to the influence of the Church of Columba, and a proof that it was still a power in the country.

The removal of the chair of Columba (850) from Iona to Dunkeld within the territories of the Picts has also its significance. Kenneth decreed that here should be the centre of the Church for the whole kingdom. The spot was well chosen, lying midway betwixt the eastern and western boundaries of his kingdom. Some relics of Columba were brought hither at the same time to give prestige and sanctity to what Popish writers love to call the “Primate’s See” of Scotland. It was easier translating the relics than the spirit of Columba to the newly-founded primacy, and it was easier to give a high-sounding name to this chair than to invest it with the spiritual power it possessed when it stood at Iona and was filled by Columba. The Abbot exercised from Dunkeld the same titular presidency which Columba had held at Iona, but without his moral dignity, which was now irretrievably departed from the Scottish abbots. At Dunkeld the chair of Columba was not far from the royal residence. Why were the kings of Alban so desirous of having the chair of the great founder of the Scottish church in close proximity with their throne and capital? Obviously because they felt

<sup>1</sup> Bellesheim, *History of the Catholic Church of Scotland*, i. 215.



that the veneration in which the memory of Columba was still held by the Scottish people made it a support to their power. They found the Columban Church the mainstay of their throne.

The chair—the term is a figure—was continued only a short time at Dunkeld. In the reign of Constantin, the son of Kenneth, who succeeded to the throne in 863, it was removed to Abernethy. Its establishment here shed a brief gleam upon this ancient seat of Pictish royalty. Even yet it had not found a permanent resting-place. Before the century was out it underwent a third removal. We now behold the chair of Columba, somewhat damaged, we fear, in prestige by these frequent translations, established at St Andrews. This place had acquired, even at this early day, a sort of mysterious importance, which made it stand out from the other cities of Scotland. The line of its ecclesiastical history, as one attempts to trace it up, becomes lost in a haze of fable and wonder which monkish legends have thrown around it. This made it a fitting site for a chair which depended for its influence and authority more on the memories of the men who had sat in it aforetime than upon any substantial powers and jurisdictions which were lodged in it now. Both Wyntoun and Bower tell us that Cellach was the first to occupy it on its removal to St Andrews. He sat in it under the title of *Epscop Alban*, or Bishop of Alban. Beside him other bishop there was not in Scotland. We shall return to Alban's one bishop immediately.

The Alban of King Constantin and Bishop Cellach was comprehended between the Forth and the Spey. These two rivers formed the boundaries of Scotland at the opening of the tenth century. As respects the region on the south of the Forth, it was shifted about and passed from master to master by the ever-changing tide of war. Now it was sub-



jected by the kings of Alban, and now it was dominated by the monarchs of Northumbria or of Wessex, the inhabitants meanwhile enduring painful vicissitudes and intolerable miseries. In the reign of Indulf (954-962), as we have already said, Edinburgh and the district betwixt the Forth and the Avon were permanently joined to Scotland. In 1018 came the great victory of the Scots over the Northumbrians. The battle took place, as already noted, at Carham-on-the-Tweed. The slaughter was immense; the Northumbrian army was all but annihilated, a disaster of which a terrible presage had been given to the men of Northumbria by a comet which appeared for thirty nights in their sky. The effect of that great battle was the surrender to Malcolm, King of Alban, of the whole region south to the Tweed, which now became the southern boundary of the Scottish kingdom.

We turn to the north. The Spey was there the boundary of the kingdom of Alban in the tenth century. In the region beyond, that is in Ross, Sutherland, and Caithness, the Norwegian Viking was master. The full rights of sovereignty, however, were never conceded to him, for the kings of Alban always claimed these provinces as dependencies, and when their arms were strong, disputed possession with the Norwegians. In Orkney and Shetland reigned Sigurd "the Stout." There the power of the kings of Norway was more firmly established than on the mainland where their government was more an assertion of dominion over the native nomads than a substantial sovereignty.

The Norwegian and Danish irruption swept round Cape Wrath and descended along the coast. The invaders established their dominion over the islands in the western sea, and the chain of their possessions extended as far south as the island of Man, over which, however, they were

able to exercise only an intermittent sovereignty. Thus it came to pass that Scotland was begirt on the north and on the west with a Norwegian zone, and only by being ever on the alert and ready for battle, was it able to preserve the body of its territory intact and its throne independent. But the little kingdom did not fare worse in this respect than other and greater nations. The tenth century was universally a time of commotion and change. The fever of invasion and conquest which five centuries before had precipitated the Goths upon the Roman Empire, appeared to have broken out anew, and was stirring the nations in the East and in the North into frightful tumult and savage war. The Saracens in countless hordes had burst into the south of Europe, and their victorious arms had conquered Spain, overrun the south of France, and were threatening even Italy. At the other extremity of the Continent, the Danes and Norwegians, less cultured in art than their contemporary warriors from the deserts of Arabia, but not less expert in war, were spreading terror and conquest over the northern kingdoms, and restoring the reign of barbarism and desolation. The kingdoms of the earth had become like the ocean when the great winds are abroad. In the midst of that raging sea was Alban in which Columba had lit his lamp, and in which it still burned, but though sore buffeted by the tempest, it was not submerged in its stormy billows. Other countries had had their religion changed, the line of their kings cut off, and their population swept away, or so largely mixed with a foreign element as to be a new people; the Angles, the Saxons, and the Danes had conquered England; the Norman commanded in France, and the Moor was master in Spain, but Scotland retained its old Church, its old kings, and its old inhabitants.

## CHAPTER XV.

### EPOCHS OF REVIVAL IN COLUMBAN CHURCH.

WE resume our brief sketch of the Columban Church during the pre-reformation ages. By the opening of the tenth century, King Constantin had established the ecclesiastical presidency, or if the reader prefer it, the "Primatial See," at St Andrews. Cellach, as we have seen, was "Episcop" of Alban.<sup>1</sup> He was president, or abbot, or bishop of the Scottish Church; for it matters little by which of these titles we designate the occupant of that ecclesiastical post. He held the same rank and authority at St Andrews which Columba did at Iona, only with vastly diminished prestige and influence. The writers of an earlier day would have styled him "abbot"; but those to whose lot it fell to chronicle the events of these times were beginning to be more familiar with the lofty Roman designations than with the humble Columban appellatives, and they speak of him as "bishop." What doubtless helped to bring about this change of title was that by this time the temporal possessions of the abbacies were being usurped by laymen, who assumed along with them the title of abbot, leaving the

<sup>1</sup> "There are two lists of the Bishops of St Andrews given to us," says Dr Skene, "one by Bower, who was Abbot of Inchcolm, and the other by Wyntoun, who was Primate of Lochleven. These lists agree, and in both Cellach is given as first Bishop of St Andrews."—*Celtic Scotland*, ii. 324; *Scotichronicon*, B. vi. c. 24; Wyntoun, *Chron.*, B. vi. c. 9. In the Legend of St Andrew, it is said of the Bishops of St Andrews—"Sic et nunc quoque in vulgari et commune locutione *Escop Alban*, id est, Episcopi Albanie appellantur."—*Chron. Picts and Scots*, p. 191.



alternative title of presbyter or bishop to the ecclesiastic who performed the spiritual duties of the abbacy. Cellach stood alone as president or bishop of Alban, for as yet there was no hierarchy in the country, nor for two hundred years after. A Roman pall had not been seen north of the Tweed, although in 638 that badge of episcopal authority had been sent by Honorius I. to Paulinus of York. We are not told who consecrated the "Bishop of Alban." Certainly Cellach's consecration did not come from Rome, for the Romans repudiated the orders of the Scottish clergy. The "Presbyters of Iona" ordained Aidan, Finan, and Colman, who were sent to evangelise in Northumbria, and who are spoken of by Bede as "bishops." May not the Presbyters or Culdees of St Andrews have consecrated Cellach? The author of the "History of the Catholic Church of Scotland" makes an important admission when he tells us that, "if the consecration was canonically performed, three bishops must have assisted at it."<sup>1</sup> In those days when there was but one bishop in Scotland, it would not be easy to bring together three bishops in one place, unless indeed they were such bishops as were the evangelists we have named above to whom Bede gives the title of bishop, though no hands but those of the "elders of Iona" had been laid upon their head.<sup>2</sup> If we shall grant this, the difficulty involved in Cellach's consecration vanishes. Neither Bede nor Bellesheim can pronounce the supposition inadmissible or even improbable, for in the Church of Rome, as in the Presbyterian Church, *Presbyter* and *Bishop* are on a level, inasmuch as both are comprehended in the same "order." The Church of Rome adheres in this point to the pattern shown to her in the New Testament when she makes her highest church-

<sup>1</sup> Bellesheim, *History of Catholic Church of Scotland*, i. 102.

<sup>2</sup> Bede, *Hist. Eccles.*, lib. iii. c. 22.

officer the presbyter. The Pope himself is of the "order" of presbyter. It is a remarkable fact, not often adverted to, that in the Church of Rome there are seven orders of clergy, or church-officers, and the highest of these seven orders is the presbyter. So is it in the Roman Church to this day. The presbyter has been made to develope or branch out into several grades or ranks which take precedence the one of the other, but all are comprehended in the same order, and that order is the PRESBYTER. When we think how Rome professes to reverence the primitive constitution of the Church, and claims to follow it, we are entitled to hold this admission on her part as a presumption at least in favour of the presbyter as the highest church-officer in New Testament times.

In noting the glimpses obtained of the Columban Church as we pass on in our historic survey we marked, as specially significant, the recall of the Columban clergy by Kenneth Macalpin, and their re-establishment in the eastern parts of Scotland and also in the Lothians. This we must regard as a national acknowledgment that the fathers of the men whom we now see brought back had suffered wrong when King Naiton, a century before, had driven them out of his dominions. It also warrants the conclusion that the conformist clergy, who remained in Pictland when their more faithful brethren took their departure, despite the influence of the court in their favour, had made but small way in the affections of the people. Their Roman tonsure, in the eyes of their flocks, was the ignominious badge of their servitude to a foreign master, and the heart of the nation still turned to the exiles beyond Drumalban as the true sons and servants of that Church which, in the days of Columba, had led their fathers out of the darkness of Druidism. The light, they remembered, had first shone upon them, not from Rome but from Iona.



The next noteworthy event in the history of the Columban Church is the enlargement of its liberties under King Gregory. The loss of the Church's purity has ever been accompanied by the loss of her liberty. The experience of the Columban Church under Naiton formed no exception to this rule. When the Pope shorn the heads of its clergy, the King taxed their lands. The first demanded spiritual homage, the latter imposed feudal burdens, and exacted lay-services. King Grig appears to have lifted off this heavy yoke, and at the same time enlarged, doubtless, their ecclesiastical immunities and freedom of action. Thus they found escape from the "Pictish bondage" in which Naiton had been the first to shut them up, and in which his successors, following his example, had retained them. This change in their position must have greatly reinvigorated them in spirit; it would fall like a dew upon their dead bones, and we can imagine with what activity and zeal they now gave themselves to the work of restoring to Scotland the aspect it had worn in better times, but which had been sorely defaced during the degenerate days which had of late passed over the country.

If we may reason from our experience in later times, part of the "bondage" in which the Pictish rulers held the Church was the interdiction of her councils. Those whose policy it has been to cripple or to overthrow the Church have commonly begun by denying to her pastors the liberty of meeting together for the purpose of holding mutual consultation, and taking combined action. The precedent of this policy is probably as old as King Naiton's days. If so, this restriction would come to an end with the rest of the Pictish thralldom. Accordingly, the next event which fixes our eye in this rapid survey of the fortunes of the Columban Church is the assembling in council of the clergy and laity



of the Scottish Church on the Mote Hill at Scone. That this was a truly national gathering does not admit of doubt, for the highest civil and ecclesiastical authorities lent it their sanction. The King and the Bishop were there.

We have already given considerable space to this Council, but it comes again before us as one of the revival epochs of the Columban Church. A "General Assembly" like this was truly a phenomenon in the tenth century. What we see on the Mote Hill is no assemblage of individual men, no gathering of clan or tribe in obedience to the summons of chief or mormaer. It is an organised body, conscious of inherent powers to meet and deliberate and act. The source whence these powers spring is the "Faith" which is the common possession of the nation. This is the constituent principle of the council: it is this which has given it being, and the object of its meeting is the re-exhibition, in some form or other, of that Faith. Lord Hailes was of opinion that the Council met to compile and emit a "Confession of Faith." There is nothing improbable in this. Only, if such a manifesto was issued, it would not be a lengthy and systematic document like those known to the age of the Reformation, but a brief, simple, and elementary compend such as were common in the days of the primitive Church. The very holding of the Council, with its three days' discussion, was itself a national Confession of Faith. It would turn the mind of the people to the subject, and when the members returned to their homes they would publish in city and glen what had been said and done on the Mote Hill of Scone.

Between King Constantine and Malcolm Canmore there is an interval of about an hundred and fifty years. The Dane on the north and the Saxon on the south kept Alban during that period full of distractions. If battle ceased at

the one extremity of the kingdom, it was sure to break out at the other. The sons of the soil were drafted away to fight on distant battle-fields, and we fear that the warlike virtues rather than the Christian graces were the object of cultivation in those days. As the famous gathering on the Mote Hill receded into the distance, and the names and orations of its members became only a tradition, an ebb would set in in the spiritual impulse which it had originated, and the Christian life would decline. It does not surprise us, therefore, that the Scottish Church passes out of view till the "Big head" ascends the throne, when it comes in sight once more, and is seen standing on its defence before Queen Margaret and the theologians of Lanfranc in the palace of Dunfermline. The silence of the Romish annalists, who have sung loud peans over the perversion of the little community in Iona, justifies us in saying that no great secession to the Romish Church had taken place meanwhile, and that the great bulk of the Columban clergy continued faithful to their ancient creed. The scandal their forms of worship gave to Queen Margaret, accustomed from her youth to the imposing ceremonials of Canterbury, and the accusations she brought against them, appear to us a tribute to their fidelity and constancy.

Nor does it appear that Queen Margaret gained any great victory as the result of this conference. Bishop Turgot, it is true, tells us that the Columban pastors answered nothing, by which we understand the bishop to mean, that they answered nothing which he could recognise as an answer to Margaret's arguments, or which he judged it prudent to record. He tells us also that from this time the eucharistic customs in Scotland were reformed, that is, in the Roman sense, but we have indubitable evidence that this was not the fact. Margaret's success lay in another direction. She

could not convert the nation, or bend the obduracy of its benighted clergy, but she could build a magnificent cathedral, and install under its superb roof the Roman worship with becoming pomp. This she did. And further, she could do much by her zeal and tact, her high character, and her profuse charities, seconded as she was by the power of a husband who was passionately devoted to her, to turn the tide of fashion, which sways in religion as in other things, and bring men over from a church which clothed her clergy in woollen garments, and celebrated her eucharist at wooden tables, to a church that dressed her priests in robes of silk, and celebrated her festivals at marble altars, with the rich accompaniments of gold and silver vessels, of smoking thurifers, and intoned litanies and chants.

Turgot informs us that in the place where Margaret's nuptials were celebrated, that is, in Dunfermline, "she erected a noble church, which she dedicated to the Holy Trinity; and she decorated it with many ornaments, among which not a few of her gifts, which were designed for the most holy service of the altar, consisted of vases of solid and pure gold. She also introduced the crucifix into the Church, having presented one to this church richly ornamented with gold and silver, intermixed with precious stones, and similar crucifixes she left to other churches as marks of her piety and devotion, of which the church of St Andrews affords an instance, where a beautiful crucifix which she there erected is still to be seen."<sup>1</sup>

The transference of the Scottish population in a body from the Columban fold to the Church of Queen Margaret could be accomplished in only one of two ways. The first was a royal edict enjoining conformity in creed and worship, and enforcing it by the sword. Malcolm Canmore

<sup>1</sup> *Vita S. Margarete*, cap. lii.



was too humane and magnanimous a prince to think of anything so harsh and tyrannical. And had he attempted it he might have found the summary conversion of a people who had been long under Columban teaching, a task more difficult even than his ancestor Kenneth MacAlpin found the subjugation of the Picts and their union with the Scots. The second way was to send preachers of the new faith over the land to persuade the people that Queen Margaret's was the better religion, and that the Columban faith was a worn out creed, which was now abandoned by the whole of Christendom, except by themselves. But where were these preachers to be found? If they wish to make any conversions they must discourse in Gaelic, for the Scots of that day understood no other tongue. To preach in Gaelic was precisely what the missionaries at Margaret's service could not do. King Malcolm could not act as interpreter to a whole nation, although his zeal to second his Queen's wishes for the conversion of the Scots made him willingly undertake this office at the conference in his own palace. Queen Margaret, therefore, was obliged to be content with having inaugurated her project of converting Scotland, leaving it to the slow but sure working of time, to the seductions and blandishments of the Court, to the powerful attractions of a sensuous worship, and to the example and influence of her Saxon followers, which were crowding every day in greater numbers into the country, to complete the change which she had begun, and the issue of which would be to add the land of Columba to the long roll of kingdoms which were already subject to the Papal sceptre.

What a happiness for Margaret to think that she should be the instrument chosen for accomplishing so great a work! What an honour to be the saviour of the country in which she had first set foot as a stranger, and to have her name

linked in all time to come with one of the more brilliant triumphs of the faith, and one of the greatest victories of the Church ! for such would the suppression of the great Columban uprising be accounted at Rome. This were object worthy of the holiest ambition : this were crown meet for the brow of the greatest saint—a crown of such surpassing brightness that, compared with it the crown of Scotland, in Margaret's estimation was but a worthless bauble.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE CULDEES—THEIR ORIGIN—THEIR FUNCTIONS— THEIR DIFFUSION.

THE period we have so rapidly traversed, that is from King Constantin to Malcolm Canmore, was a time of transition to the Columban Church. The monastic arrangement was being superseded by the order of secular clergy. We have already seen that when Columba began the Christianisation of Scotland, he proceeded on the plan of planting, at suitable sites, little colonies, or brotherhoods of trained missionaries, commonly twelve in number, with one to oversee the rest, who received the title of abbot or father. These spots were the basis of evangelistic operations on the surrounding district. That district was their parish or diocese, though as yet there was neither parish nor diocese established by law in Scotland. In an unsettled and lawless state of society, as was the condition of Scotland when Columba began his labours in it, it was hardly possible to act on any other plan. Solitary missionaries or pastors were out of the question from the savage assaults to which they would be exposed. But now under a settled government, and with the nation Christianised, the necessity for this mode of operation was at an end. Accordingly the monasteries, as the Columban houses were often termed, are now seen to be in a state of dissolution: the apostolic "twelve" with their abbot, the image of the great Abbot at Iona, are disappearing: the



“brotherhoods” are breaking up in many places, and their individual members are going forth to select their spheres of labour according to their own predilections, and as the necessities of the country may appear to them to demand.

Other causes acted along with this one in bringing about a change of the old Columban arrangements. The religious houses were the first to be attacked when a Viking invasion took place. They owed this distinction, one, of course, which they did not covet, to the idea entertained by the Norsemen that such places contained store of treasure. If the brethren should disperse and live apart, they were not so likely to draw down upon themselves the northern lightnings. Besides, the tendency was growing to adopt the anchorite or solitary life as a higher form of spirituality, and one more acceptable to the Deity. Ever as the evangelic idea declined and the self-righteous principle gathered strength, asceticism asserted itself. It filled the deserts of Sinai and Egypt in early times with crowds of men whose emaciated and hideous bodies were but the picture of their souls, overrun and defiled with all manner of spiritual maladies and sores. The disease was far from having reached this acute stage in Scotland; still we hear of anchorites seeking out caves by the sea-shore, or a separate cell in some island,<sup>1</sup> or a retreat in a landward desert, under the idea that in proportion as they were unserviceable to the world and to themselves, they were serviceable to the Church and to God. Another abuse of the times contributed, doubtless, to the dissolution of the Columban establishments. The abbeys waxed in riches till at length they

<sup>1</sup> These cells were of stone, without mortar, the walls thick and the roofs dome-shaped. They looked very like large bee-hives. A cell of this description, the abode most probably of some anchorite in the centuries under review, is still to be seen in Inchcolm, in the Firth of Forth. Anderson, *Scotland in Early Christian Times*, i. 69.

became too great a temptation to be withstood by powerful laymen. They first set covetous eyes upon them, and finally they laid violent hands on the lands of the greater institutions. The powerful abbey of Dunkeld was dealt with in this manner and converted into a lay-earldom, the owner calling himself abbot, but leaving the spiritual duties to be discharged by the prior, while he himself put on a coat of mail and rode into the battlefield, and took his risks of life and limb with other mail-clad mormaers and armed knights.

It is at this period, that is, in the ninth and tenth centuries, that the Culdees prominently make their appearance. Romish writers have laboured hard to invest the rise of the Culdees with mystery, and break them off from the Columban stock, and establish for them an original and independent origin. They present us with a number of minute, curious, and legendary accounts to show how the Culdees arose, and what was their relation to the Church of Columba on the one hand and the Church of Rome on the other. They trace their first origin to the ascetics whom we have seen retiring to caves and solitary places, and there devoting themselves to the service of God in what they accounted the highest form of the religious life. These men were styled *Deicolæ*, that is, God worshippers. This was the name given them on the Continent, where, as we have seen in the course of this history, they proved themselves zealous and successful preachers of the Gospel. In Ireland they were styled *Ceile De*, which signifies *Servants of God*. The name given them in Scotland was *Keledei*, which has the same signification. These three names are applied to the same people, those even known in our common histories as the Culdees.

An interesting people were these *Ceile De*, and we should



like to know the truth about them. Those who have a faith in the legends of the eighth and ninth centuries, speak as if the truth about the Culdees was to be learned only from these traditions. The Culdees, say they, were not the development or continuation of the Columban Church: on the contrary, their rise was the signal for the fall and extinction of that Church. They were a new body, projected through the old ecclesiastical strata of Scotland to the disruption and displacement of the old Columban system. The Culdees, they tell us, at their first appearance, lived separately as anchorites. In course of time they formed themselves into communities of anchorites or hermits. By-and-bye, that is, in the ninth century, they were brought under canonical rule, and finally they were engaged as secular canons in conducting the services in the cathedrals. Such, in brief, is their history, as traced by those who regard them as a new order of clerics under the influence of the Roman Church, which superseded the Columban clergy.

The facts on which this theory is based are meagre indeed, and if they did not contain a hidden meaning, which the initiated only can perceive, they could not be accepted as warranting the conclusions drawn from them. The evidence resolves itself into three legends. The first is the legend of St Servanus or Serf. This legend traces the genealogy of the Culdees through Oleath, son of Eliud, King of Canaan, and his wife Alpia, daughter of a King of Arabia. The worthy couple, long childless, were at last blessed with two sons, to the second of whom was given in baptism the name of Servanus. This Servanus came to Rome, carrying with him such a reputation for sanctity that he was elected pope, and reigned seven years. Vacating the holy seat, for what reason it is not said, the saint travelled through Gaul and England, and finally arrived in Scotland. Here he made the



acquaintance of Adamnan, Abbot of Iona, who showed him an island in Lochleven finely adapted for the foundation of a new order of monks. So rose the Culdees of Lochleven. It is one of the greatest instances of humility on record, a pope becoming abbot of a Scottish Culdee monastery, and fixing his seat in the island of Lochleven.

Some additional particulars regarding the founder of the Lochleven monastery are given us by Dr Skene. In his island monastery, we are told, Servanus remained seven years. "Thence he goes about the whole region of Fife, founding churches everywhere. The other places mentioned in his life in connection with him are the cave at Dysart, on the north shore of the Firth of Forth, where he had his celebrated discussion with the devil, and where the memory of St Serf is still held in honour; Tuligbotuan or Tullybothy, Tuligcultrin or Tillicoultry, Alveth and Atheren, now Aithrey, all in the district on the north side of the Forth, extending from Stirling to Alloa. The only other place mentioned is his 'Cella Dunenense,' or cell at Dunning, in Stratherne, where he slew a dragon with his pastoral staff, in a valley still called the Dragon's Den."

"Finally, after many miracles, after divine virtues, after founding many churches, the saint, having given his peace to the brethren, yielded up his spirit in his cell at Dunning, on the first day of the Kalends of July; and his disciples and the people of the province take his body to Cuilenross, and there, with psalms and hymns and canticles, he was honourably buried."<sup>1</sup>

We have another form of this legend in an old Irish document. "In the tract on the mothers of the saints," says Dr Skene, "which is ascribed to Aengus, the Culdee, in the ninth century, we are told that Alma, the daughter of

<sup>1</sup> Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, ii. 257.

the King of the Cruithnech, or Picts, was the mother of Serb or Serf, son of Proc, King of Canaan, of Egypt; and he is the venerable old man who possesses Cuilenros, in Stratherne, in the comgells between the Ochil Hills and the Sea of Guidan. . . . The Scotch part of the legend, like that of Bonifacius, is supported by the dedications; all the churches in the places mentioned in connection with him being dedicated to St Serf. . . . There is in the chartulary of St Andrews a memorandum of some early charters in the Celtic period, and one of them is a grant by which 'Brude, son of Dergard, who is said by old tradition to have been the last of the Kings of the Picts'—which however he was not—gives the isle of Lochlevine to the omnipotent God, and to Saint Servanus, and to the *Keledei hermits* dwelling there, who are serving and shall serve God in that island."<sup>1</sup>

The second legend gives us, with even more minute detail—in which we shall not follow it—the foundation of St Andrews, with its monasteries and monks. We learn from it how it came that St Peter, to whom King Nectan dedicated his dominions after driving out the Columban clergy, lost his supremacy, and St Andrew came in his room as the patron saint of Scotland. The legend begins with the crucifixion of St Andrew at Patras. There his bones rested in the grave till the age of Constantin—that is, two hundred and seventy years. An angel appeared to Regulus, Bishop of Patras, and commanded him to exhume the relics of the apostle, and set sail with them to a land to be afterwards shown to him. After long voyaging, first among the Greek islands, and afterwards in more northern seas, Regulus came to a place where Hungus, King of the Picts, was about to engage in battle with Athelstan and his Saxons. Before

<sup>1</sup> Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, ii. 258, 259. *Chron. Picts and Scots*, 201. *Registrum Prioratus St Andrea*, pp. 113-118.



the battle St Andrew appeared to the Pictish King and promised him victory on condition of his dedicating his dominions to him. In virtue of the intercession of St Andrew, the arms of Hungus were victorious, and he and the Picts vowed to hold the apostle "in honour for ever." This legend, however, does not end here. Three days after the battle, Bishop Regulus is bidden by angels to sail northwards with the apostle's relics, and to build a church at the spot where it should happen to his vessel to be wrecked. "After many wanderings," says Bellesheim, reciting the legend, "they are cast ashore on the eastern coast of Scotland, at a place formerly called Muckcross, but now Kyrli-mont. Here (where St Andrews grew up in latter times) Regulus erected a cross which he had brought from Patras; and King Hungus gave the place to God, and St Andrew, his apostle, as a gift for ever."<sup>1</sup>

It is vain to look for accuracy of date in a legend. The reference to Constantin would fix the translation of the relics of St Andrew to Scotland not later than the fourth century, but King Hungus did not reign till four hundred years after that date, namely, from 731 to 761. In a dream, the most incongruous and impossible occurrences do not in the least disturb us, or appear at all impossible, and neither ought incongruities and discrepancies to stumble us in a legend. "Some notion of the true date," says Bellesheim, "seems to have been preserved; for we read in one chronicle that in the year 761, 'ye relikis of Sanct Andrew ye Apostel com in Scotland,' a date which corresponds with the last year of the reign of the King Angus (MacFergus) mentioned in the legend."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bellesheim, *Catholic Church of Scotland*, i. 192.

<sup>2</sup> *Chronicles of the Picts and Scots*, p. 387; Bellesheim, *Catholic Church of Scotland*, i. 196, 197.



The legend consists of four parts, or rather four legends, and no little ingenuity is required to make the four parts hang together, and form one consistent story. According to the third form of the legend, "Bishop Regulus, accompanied by holy men, direct their ships towards the north, and on the eve of St Michael arrive at the land of the Picts, at a place called Muckros, but now Kylrimont, and his vessel being wrecked, he erects a cross he had brought from Patras, and remains there seven days and nights. . . . King Hungus then went with the holy men to Chilrymont, and, making a circuit round a great part of that place, immolated it to God and St Andrew for the erection of churches and oratories. King Hungus and Bishop Regulus and the rest proceeded round it seven times, Bishop Regulus carrying on his head the relics of St Andrew, his followers chanting hymns, and King Hungus following on foot, and after him the magnates of the kingdom. . . . King Hungus gave this place, namely, Chilrymont, to God and St Andrew, his apostle, with waters, meadows, fields, pastures, moors, and woods, as a gift for ever, and granted the place with such liberty that its inhabitants should be free, and for ever relieved from the burden of hosting and building castles and bridges and all secular exactions. Bishop Regulus then chanted the Alleluia, that God might protect that place in honour of the apostle, and in token of this freedom, King Hungus took a turf in presence of the Pictish nobles, and laid it on the altar of St Andrew, and offered that same turf upon it." <sup>1</sup> So far the legends relating to Lochleven and St Andrews; but we are unable to see that they throw any light upon the point at issue, which is: Were the Culdees a new order of monks in alliance with the Roman Church, and hostile to the old Columban clergy which they are held to have displaced?

<sup>1</sup> Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, ii. 265, 266.

This monkish generation, springing silently up in Scotland, and living as anchorites in seaside caves or landward deserts, were at length brought under canonical rule preparatory to their final end, which was, it is alleged, the subversion of a church whose clergy were neither tonsured after the Roman fashion, nor celebrated Easter according to the Roman reckoning. Of their subjection to rule, we have a highly poetical or symbolical representation. "Like the *Deicola*, too, the *Ceile De* of Ireland were brought, early in the ninth century, under canonical rule. This important fact is found in the form of legend, in which, however, say the supporters of this theory, the historical germ is easily detected. The Irish annals record, under the year 811: 'In this year the *Ceile De* came over the sea with dry feet, without a vessel; and a written roll was given him from heaven, out of which he preached to the Irish, and it was carried upon again when the sermon was finished.'"<sup>1</sup> The gloss of Bellesheim on this legend is as follows: "The date of the coming of this *Ceile De* was sixty-eight years after Chrodegang drew up his canonical rule; and it was subsequent also to the publication of the letter addressed by a certain *Deicola* to the *Deicolæ* all over the world, and only five years before the Council of Aix-la-Chapelle. The legend above quoted may therefore," says Dr Bellesheim, "be reasonably interpreted to refer to the introduction into Ireland of the canonical rule."<sup>2</sup> It may be so. There is a saying that truth dwells at the bottom of a well. This legend may be one of those wells in which the truth is pleased to hide herself, and were we to descend to the bottom of it we would doubtless be rewarded with a clear sight of the mystery. But, verily, the well is deep and its water muddy!

<sup>1</sup> Reeves, *British Culdees*, p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> Bellesheim, *Catholic Church of Scotland*, i. 187, 188.

We do not presume to gainsay these venerable authorities. They are oracular voices from out a very thick darkness, and it becomes us to hold our peace and let them speak. But were we to be allowed just a slight expression of feeling it would be to intimate a wish to have these three legends supplemented by a fourth, in order to make clear some things left dubious and even dark in the first three. On the supposition that the Culdees were friends of Rome who had taken the field against the Columban Church, the history of the four or five following centuries becomes full of enigmas. What, for instance, shall we say of King David I. He was a devoted son of the Church of Rome. No one has questioned his sincere attachment to her, which indeed he placed above suspicion by the benefactions which he showered on that Church in Scotland. One of his royal descendants complainingly remarked of him that he was a "sair sanct to the crown." But it is just as true that he was a "sair sanct" to the Culdees. History attests that he laid a heavy hand upon them, spoiling them of the few earthly goods left them, and in some instances driving them out of their abodes. How are we to explain this on the supposition that both the Culdees and King David were members of the Church of Rome and zealous supporters of her? Was King David acting a double part? Was he with one hand showering wealth upon the Church, and with the other dealing out stripes to some of her best children? If it should please the *Ceile De*, who came over the sea with dry feet, without a vessel, in the year 811, to come back, he may perchance bring with him another roll containing a solution of this riddle.

But this is little compared with the difficulty we encounter when we turn our eyes to the continent. There a whole army of Culdee missionaries have gone forth and are taking



possession of northern Europe. It is acknowledged by Romanists that the continental Culdees were a branch of the great Culdee family of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales.<sup>1</sup> That this great army was *Scotic*—*Scotic* in birth, *Scotic* in dress, and in characteristics, history permits not to be doubted. In proportion as their sphere contracted at home, they turned in increasing numbers to the vast field opened to them beyond seas. In whose name do they wage this war? in that of Rome or in that of Iona? It was their boast that they had sat at the feet of the "elders" of Iona, and they made no secret of their mission, which was to preach the doctrine they had learned in that famous school, and which its founder had drawn from the unpolluted fountain of Holy Scripture. They adhered as closely to the instructions of Columba on the continent, as they had done in England, where, as Bede informs us, they taught "those things only which are contained in the writings of the prophets, evangelists, and apostles, diligently observing the works of piety and purity."<sup>2</sup> Selecting a suitable site, they set themselves down as a brotherhood, and went to work on the plan of Columba, exhibiting to the natives the whole economy of civilised life at the same time that they communicated to them the doctrines of the Christian faith. Their institutions stood out in marked contrast to the Roman confraternities. We have already traced them all over northern Europe,<sup>3</sup> and have seen them kindling the light in the midst of the immemorial darkness, planting centres of civilisation where till then had reigned an ancient and unbroken barbarism, sowing the seeds of knowledge in nations which they found shrouded in gross ignorance, and teaching the idolater to worship

<sup>1</sup> Bellesheim, *Catholic Church of Scotland*, i. 184; Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, ii. 252.

<sup>2</sup> Bede, *Hist.*, iii. 4.

<sup>3</sup> *Hist. Scot. Nation*, ii., chap. xxvi., xxvii., xxviii.

"Him who made the seven stars and Orion." This was the work of the Culdees. They claim to be judged by their works. The Rome of our day claims them as her allies. The Rome of their own day made no mistake regarding them. They were not born in her camp: they did not wear her livery: and she showed what she thought of them when she sent her agents with the English pervert Boniface at their head, to chase them from the continent and uproot the institutions they had founded.

What, then, is the truth about the Culdees? It is simply this, that the Church of the Culdees was a continuation of the Church of Columba. The preponderance of proof from history and from all the probabilities of the case in favour of this proposition is overwhelming, while all attempts to establish the opposite theory are utter failures. It is to be considered that from the first the anchorite system had formed part of the Columban arrangements. It was customary for the brethren at stated seasons to retire to some solitary place, some isle or cave, for rest and meditation. The practice was analogous to the holiday of a modern clergyman. The hard-worked ministers of our cities find it good to become anchorites for a few weeks once a year and rusticate in our highlands or by the sea-shore. This was what the Columban clergy did, with this difference, that their seclusion was perhaps a little more strict than their successors of the present day deem it requisite to subject themselves to. When, in process of time, and by the operation of the various agencies we have already explained, the Columban houses began to be broken up and the brethren dispersed, the number of solitaries or anchorites would be greatly increased. But though they now lived apart and had dwellings of their own, it does not follow that they would abandon the public duties of their office, which were to maintain



the worship of God in the churches, and instruct their countrymen. They would rather feel it all the more imperative to keep up the practices of piety and the public acts of devotion. From amongst them little bands of missionaries were continually going forth into the foreign field, and, while caring for it, surely they would not permit the home field to sink into practical heathenism.

In the historic glimpses we obtain of them they are seen acting in this very capacity, that is, keeping up the service of God in the churches. What, then, so probable as that now they began to be known as *Ceile De*,<sup>1</sup> that is, the "servants of God," all the more so that the name agreed so well with the fact. The church of Dunkeld was founded by Constantin, the son of Fergus, King of the Picts (810-820), that is, about thirty years before the union of the two nations. It is recorded by Alexander Mylne, a canon of that church in 1575, that Constantin placed there "religious men who are popularly called Keledei, otherwise Colidei, that is, God worshippers, who, according to the rite of the Oriental church, had wives." Their office was to "minister," that is, to conduct the public worship of God; and such also was their function in the "church of St Regulus, now St Andrew."<sup>2</sup> Not at the seats of the principal churches only were the Culdees or Columbites—for we have not met a particle of proof to show that they were different—congregated, but throughout the country there were still small communities of these religious men who maintained Divine service in their localities. In remote parts where there was

<sup>1</sup> "In the Gaelic, *Ceile* signifies a servant, hence *Ceile De*, the servants of God, *De* being the genitive of *Dia*, God."—Chalmers's *Caledonia*, book iii., p. 134.

<sup>2</sup> Mylne, *Vitæ Episcoporum Dunkeldensium*, p. 4; Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, ii. 276.



only a single Culdee living solitarily, the public worship of God would not be permitted to fall into disuse.

Were we to enumerate all the places where Culdee establishments existed the list would be long indeed. Abernethy, Aberbrothoc, Montrose, Arbirlot, Brechin, St Andrews, Dunfermline, Dull, Dunkeld, Mortlach, Blairgowrie, Ratho, Kinghorn, Lesmahagow, Applecross, Dornoch, Turriff, are a few centres of the Culdee family in Scotland. Around these were grouped smaller communities, too many to be here enumerated, with others now wholly forgotten. There were then no parishes and no tithes in Scotland; how, then, did this large staff of Culdee pastors subsist? By this time the bulk of their original endowments had been appropriated by laymen, and the chief means of subsistence left them were the voluntary offerings of the people.<sup>1</sup>

"The great religious establishments which existed in the middle of the ninth century were still kept up in the beginning of the twelfth, and, with the exception of Iona, were all seats of the Culdees."<sup>2</sup> This is a most important admission, coming, as it does, from those who maintain that the Culdees were a new order of monks, different in faith and worship from the old Columban Church. The name Culdee does not appear till the year 800: it then represented, we are led to understand, only a few anchorites. But half a century afterwards the "great religious establishments," with the exception of Iona, "were all seats of the Culdees." How came a few anchorites in so short a space of time to fill the land? How came they to render the

<sup>1</sup> The existence of Culdee establishments at all these places and at others is authenticated by the oldest existing records, viz., the Old Registry of Aberbrothoc, the Registry of the Priory of St Andrews, Chartulary of Glasgow, Charters of Holyrood, Chartulary of Aberdeen, Register of Dunfermline. See also Robertson's *Scholastic Offices of the Scottish Church*; *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. v., 73, 74.

<sup>2</sup> Grubb, *Ecclesiastical History of Scotland*, i. 241.

Roman doctrine so palatable to a people who had so long sought their spiritual food in the schools of Columba? How came they to plant themselves down on the old foundations of the Columbites, and enter possession of what remained of their lands and heritages? This implies both a civil and an ecclesiastical revolution. Where is the record of such a revolution? And further, how came the Culdees to be objects of aversion and hatred to the same parties who had disliked and opposed the Church of Columba? Why did Queen Margaret adopt a policy of repression, and her son, David I., a policy of extermination towards them? We do not see what rational answer can be given to these questions in accordance with the new theory of the Culdees. That theory has its birth in an earnest and, we do not question, conscientious desire to show that the line of Columba failed, that Iona after all had only a mushroom existence of two centuries or so, and that Scottish Christianity had its rise not on the bare Rock amid the western storms, but on that imperial mount on which Cæsars and Pontiffs have left their proud traces. With that view, however, one authority of no mean order refuses to concur. That authority is history. Her clear verdict is that the Culdees were no new sect of religionists, which had arisen on the soil, or had been imported from abroad; that they were the adherents of the old faith which had entered Scotland at a very early period, which after a time of decay had again shone out in greater brightness than ever in the mission of Columba, but becoming again obscured by Roman innovations had found maintainers of its ancient purity in the Culdees, the true sons of Iona, and the pioneers of the Reformation, the dawn of which they saw afar off, and which, as we shall afterwards show, some few of their number lived to welcome.

## CHAPTER XVII.

A.D. 1069—1093.

NORWEGIAN KINGDOM OF ORKNEY—MARGARET REVOLUTIONISES SCOTLAND—DEATH OF MALCOLM AND MARGARET—ESTIMATE OF MARGARET'S CHARACTER AND SERVICES.

WE come back to the battles of the sword. Before, however, returning to the church reforms of Queen Margaret, and the war ventures of Malcolm the "Bighead," it may be well to run our eye over the outlying parts of Scotland on the north, and take note of the little bye-drama being transacted there. Orkney and Zetland and the adjacent coasts had for some centuries a history of their own. A variety of causes contributed to separate their fate, for a while, from that of the mainland. In the first place, they lay remote from the centre of government, and only at times were they careful to give obedience to the commands which issued from the royal palace of Scone, or of Dunfermline. In the second place, they lay on the highway of the Vikings. When these sea robbers came forth to load their vessels with a miscellaneous booty, consisting of stolen goods and miserable captives, Orkney and Zetland were the first to feel the heavy hand of the plunderers. These islands, moreover, were placed betwixt two hostile powers, who struggled for the possession and mastery of them. They had Alban on the one side and Norway on the other, and



they accounted it good policy to submit to the master, whether Scot or Dane, who should prove himself for the time the stronger. The Scottish King was the nearer to them. They were parted from Alban by only the narrow Pentland, whereas Norway was removed from them by the whole breadth of the German Sea. But before the King of the Scots could transport his army by slow and laborious marches over land to the northern extremities of his kingdom, a powerful fleet, manned by fierce warriors, would sweep across from the distant Norway, and the islanders had no alternative except to wage hopeless battle or accept the Norwegian or Danish rule. Thus their allegiance kept oscillating from side to side of the German Ocean. They hung suspended betwixt Alban and Norway, and their existence for two or three centuries was full of vicissitudes and calamities. Even Alban was not at all times equally near to them. When the Scottish sceptre was weak, Alban would fall back to the Spey, and the Norwegian jarl was master in the intervening lands of Caithness and Sutherland. And when that sceptre again gathered strength, Alban would stretch itself northward to where the great headlands of Caithness look across the waters of the Frith to the bold precipices and cliffs that line the coast of Orkney.

The inhabitants of Orkney and Zetland belonged to the same race with those on the mainland. They were members of the great Caledonian or Pictish family. Their early religion was Druidism, that is, the worship of the sun or Baal. This, which was the universal worship of primeval times, would seem to have spread wider than any other religion since, if we may judge from the fact that it has left its imprints in every land. In the course of its progress it reached these islands in the northern sea. Their secure situation, their equable climate, and the tractable disposi-

tions of the natives recommended them to the Druid as a suitable centre where he might establish his worship and develop his system. Here he could celebrate his horrid rites and exercise his tyrannical sway without molestation. In this secure retreat, with the tides of the stormy Pentland as a rampart, he could exact his dues and offerings, celebrate his festivals with becoming pomp, and drag as many victims to his blood-stained altars as he chose to immolate or his god demanded. The rude but massy remains of the structures in which the priests of this cruel superstition practised their rites, remain to our day, and attest the strength and splendour in which Druidism flourished in Orkney at an early age.

But light at last broke in, and the cloud which had so long hung above that region was dispelled. The emancipation of these islands from this terrible yoke was one of the first fruits of Columba's labours. When the great missionary visited Brude, king of the northern Picts, in his palace at Inverness, he solicited and obtained from him a promise that he would use his power for the protection of any missionaries from Iona that might visit the Orkneys on a tour of evangelisation. In due time the missionaries were sent, and the result was that the Druid fell before the preaching of the Cross, and the islands became Christian. Their conversion is recorded in the Scandinavian chronicles, and attested by the traditions and memorials which still linger in these parts of this early visit from the fathers of Iona. The missionary zeal of that famous community was then just opening out into the first vigour of its enthusiasm. Enterprises were being planned to countries more remote, and involving greater perils to those who undertook them, than this expedition to the Orkneys, and it would have been strange, if, while the darkness was being rolled aside from



France and Germany, the night should be left to brood over a territory lying only a few days' sail from Iona. The first missionary to visit the Orkneys was Cormac, a companion of Columba. His visit was made about the year 565.

Christian Orkney had risen with Iona and it fell with Iona. Across the sea came the Viking, and the condition of these dwellers in the northern isles was speedily changed for the worse. In his first visits all that the Norseman sought was plunder. In his subsequent ones he aimed at making conquests. Having at last established his dominion on this side the German Sea, the heathen population of the Norwegian and Danish kingdoms flocked across to settle in Orkney and Caithness, and with this mongrel multitude returned the old darkness. It thickened in proportion as the number of the pagan immigrants increased, till at last the Orkneys and the adjoining coasts on the mainland were nearly as much in need of light from Iona as when the first missionaries of Columba visited them. The Norsemen opened their invasions at the beginning of the ninth century in the spoiling of Iona, and they closed them in the middle of the thirteenth at the battle of Largs, where they sustained so decisive a defeat that their power in Scotland was finally broken.

After a century of raids, in which much blood had been shed, and vast numbers of wretched captives carried across the sea, Harold Harfager, King of Norway, at the beginning of the tenth century, appeared with his fleet in the Scottish seas. It was evident that something more than plunder was now meditated. The Norwegian monarch made himself master of the Orkneys. The subjection of the Hebrides followed. Harold Harfager committed his new conquests to the care of his earls, whom he appointed to govern in his name. Remote from the centre of the Norwegian authority,



these governors forgot sometimes that they were deputies and vassals, and exercised as despotic a command as if they had been kings. They and their descendants governed the earldom of Orkney for some centuries. Not content with exercising sway over the northern and western isles, they became solicitous of extending their master's possessions or their own, for it was often difficult to say who was the real king, the monarch or the vassal earl. With this in view they crossed the Pentland Firth, and annexed Caithness and Sutherland to their island earldoms. The Scandinavian sagas say that at one time they extended their sway as far south as the shores of the Moray Firth. But nothing in the Scottish chronicles gives countenance to this, and we regard it as a fictitious apotheosis of Scandinavian heroes and heroism rather than an accomplished fact to have a place given it in history.

It fared ill with Christianity in northern Scotland during these centuries. The invaders, when they entered the country, and for some time after, were still pagans. Accordingly, the first brunt of their fury fell upon the Christian establishments, which their religion, cruel alike in its instincts and in its policy, taught them to destroy. The Columban churches were razed, the schools connected with them rooted out, and all that had been won slowly and with labour during the three centuries that had elapsed since Columba's visit to King Brude, in which their conversion had had its rise, was in danger of being swept away by this torrent of heathen invasion. Here was a fine opportunity offered the Culdees of proving that they were sprung of the old stock, and still retained something of the zeal and courage which had faced hordes as barbarous, and carried the light into lands yet darker. And they were not wholly wanting to the occasion. While the Norsemen were cross-

ing the Pentland Firth, southward, sword in hand, to slay, the Culdees were on their way northward to cast in the salt of Christianity and heal these waters of desolation at their source. The second evangelisation, however, proceeded slowly as compared with the first, and the Culdee missionaries with great toil would have reaped little fruit if it had not been for an important event which came at this time to second their efforts. This was the conversion of Norway itself to the Christian faith under King Olave Tryggvossou. In the opinion of the Norwegian colonists, the fact that their king and nation had embraced Christianity greatly strengthened the argument for its truth, and disposed them to give more heed to the instructions of those who were seeking to win them to what was now the religion of their countrymen on the other side of the German Sea. Moreover, King Olave Tryggvossou sought to spread the Christian faith among his subjects in Orkney and the Hebrides as a means of safeguarding his home dominions. The Norwegian colonists retained in their new country their old habit of roving and their love of plunder, and would at times cross the sea on a predatory expedition to the mother country. Olave Tryggvossou wisely judged that if he could make them Christians, he would put an end to these unpleasant visits. He sent missionaries from Norway to take part with the Culdees in their good work in the Orkney Islands, and the work of evangelisation now went more rapidly onwards. By his influence, too, Sigurd the "Stout," one of the more notable of the earls who governed in his name in Orkney, was led to accept Christianity, and, as the result of all these concurring agencies, the Norwegian settlers in Orkney and the North of Scotland by the end of the ninth and beginning of the tenth century were nominal adherents of the Christian Church. The spiritual change effected on



these converts might not go far down, but it would draw after it doubtless many political and social ameliorations, and contribute to mix and finally amalgamate the two peoples.

It were needless to pursue minutely events which were transacted on a provincial stage, and the influence of which was not sensibly felt beyond the narrow limits within which they were done. Sigurd the Stout, whose conversion has just been mentioned, is said by the Scandinavian Sagas to have married a daughter of Malcolm II., King of Scotland. There was born to him, as has been recorded in a former chapter, a son, whom he named Thorfin. Sigurd fell in the great battle of Clontarf in Ireland, in 1014. From the death of Sigurd dates the decline and fall of the Norwegian power in Scotland. The province of Caithness was taken possession of by the Scottish crown. The shadowy authority the Norwegians had exercised over Moray and Ross vanished, and the Scottish sceptre was stretched to the Pentland Firth. Caithness was erected into an earldom by Malcolm II., and given to his grandson, Thorfin, who was the founder of the church of Birsay in Orkney.

About this time an event took place which probably attracted little notice at the time, but which had graver issues than have resulted from some great battles. This was the marriage of the eldest daughter of Malcolm II. to Crinan, Abbot of Dunkeld. From this marriage sprang a race of kings destined not indeed to extinguish, but to displace or supersede the ancient Church of Scotland for some centuries by the importation of a foreign priesthood, with their rites, ceremonies, and doctrines also of foreign origin. Crinan, to whom we see the Scottish King giving his daughter in marriage, was the prince-abbot of Scotland, as his great predecessor Columba had been the presbyter-abbot of the same land. There was this difference betwixt them,



however : the duties of the Abbot of Iona lay in the spiritual sphere, those of his successor, the Abbot of Dunkeld, in the military domain. He had taken the sword, and, in verification of the warning of the old book, he perished by the sword : for like his predecessor in the chair of Dunkeld, Crinan fell in battle in 1045. He was one of the wealthiest temporal lords in the kingdom. The lands pertaining to the Abbacy of Dunkeld were extensive and fertile, and their value was further enhanced by their position in the centre of the kingdom. To this rich heritage the lay-abbot of Dunkeld had annexed the property of the monastery of Dull, in the districts of Atholl and Argyle. From this marriage sprang Duncan, who was afterwards King of Scotland. From Duncan sprang Malcolm III., the "Bighead," who came to the throne after the usurpation of Macbeth. From the marriage of Malcolm Canmore with Margaret of England sprang those kings who gave the finishing touch to the transformation of the Scottish Church, which Malcolm and Margaret had inaugurated, changing it from the Culdee to the Roman type, and transferring its government from the Columban abbots to the chair of the pontiffs.

We return to Malcolm and Margaret. The conference with the Columban pastors in the palace of Dunfermline has ended, and Turgot claims the victory for Margaret. Her reasonings were so convincing, Turgot tells us, and so strongly supported by the testimonies of Scripture and of the fathers, "that no one on the opposite side could say one word against them."<sup>1</sup> That the Columban disputants were silenced we may grant. The odds were sorely against them. These simple men had to bear up against royal rank, trained dialectic skill, and the reputation of saintly character, and their answers may have been less ready and their bearing

<sup>1</sup> Turgot, *Life of St Margaret*, p. 51.

less courageous than would have been the case had the two sides been more equally matched. But to be silenced is not to be convinced. This undoubtedly they were not. Nor is it true what Turgot affirms, that "giving up their obstinacy and yielding to reason, they willingly consented to adopt all that Margaret recommended."<sup>1</sup> This we know to be the opposite of the fact. The Columban pastors we find long after celebrating their worship as their fathers had done, and clinging as tenaciously as ever to those "rites" which Turgot denounces as "barbarous," and which he tells us the Columbites now renounced. We find, moreover, David I. fighting the same battle which the bishop says his mother had already won, and which had conclusively settled the matter for all coming time.<sup>2</sup> In truth, so far as we can gather, the conference appears to have yielded little or no immediate fruit. No great measures were adopted in pursuance of it. The introduction of a foreign hierarchy, and the partitioning of the kingdom into dioceses was the work of a subsequent reign. The conference was the turning of the tide, however; it brought great changes ultimately with it, but these came slowly, and after some considerable time.

Finding the Columban pastors obdurate, and their flocks bent on following the perverse ways into which Columba had led them, Margaret changed her tactics. She saw that little was to be gained by holding barren debates with the Columban clergy, and that a more likely means of compassing her end was to show the Scots the beauty and pomp of the Roman worship, assured that they could not possibly resist its fascination. By the advice of Turgot, her confessor, she built a superb church at Dunfermline.<sup>3</sup> Previous to her

<sup>1</sup> Turgot, *Life of St Margaret*, p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 48, 49.

<sup>3</sup> Fordoun says that Malcolm founded the church at Dunfermline long before he founded the cathedral at Durham, which he did in 1093.



arrival in Scotland, the churches north of the Forth were constructed of wood or wattles, roofed with reeds. Such sanctuaries in Margaret's eyes were fit for nothing but the "barbarous" rites of the Columbites. A temple of stone did she rear "for an eternal memorial of her name and devotion in the place where her nuptials had been held," says Turgot. "This church," he continues, "she beautified with rich gifts of various kinds, among which, as is well known, were many vessels of pure and solid gold, for the sacred service of the altar. . . . She also placed there a cross of priceless value, bearing the figure of the Saviour, which she had caused to be covered with the purest gold and silver studded with gems, a token, even to the present day, of the earnestness of her faith. . . . Her chamber was never without such objects, those I mean which appertained to the dignity of the divine service. It was, so to say, a workshop of sacred art; copes for the cantors, chasubles, stoles, altar cloths, and other priestly vestments and church ornaments, were always to be seen, either already made, of an admirable beauty, or in course of preparation."<sup>1</sup>

In this passage Bishop Turgot unconsciously takes stock of Margaret's piety. It worked by Art, and it brought forth the good fruits of "copes, chasubles, stoles, and altar cloths." He also paints her ideal of worship taken at the highest. Her "ideal" was not borrowed from that book, which, seeing it has the Deity for its author, alone contains the authoritative definition of worship. It is there shown to be severely simple and exclusively spiritual. Worship is not gold and silver in however large a sum. Nor is it art, however skilful and beautiful; nor is it a temple, however superb; nor is it a priest, however gorgeously attired. Worship is the communion of the soul with God, direct, immediate, and with-

<sup>1</sup> Turgot, *Life of St Margaret*, pp. 29, 30.



out the intervention of earthly priest. And religion is that principle in the heart from which this communion springs. So does the book to which we have referred define worship. This gives it a sublimity that soars far above temple however grand, and priest however mystically robed. To this true and grand conception of worship Queen Margaret had not lifted her mind. She needed a crucifix formed of the wood of the true cross that her faith might lay hold on the Crucified, and an altar of marble, with priests in splendid vestments ministering before it, that her piety might burn and her devotion soar. The patriarchs of an early day worshipped without these accessories; their altar of unhewn stone on the open Palestine plain had little of show, yet the devotions performed there lacked neither faith nor fire. It was not amid magnificent fanes that the zeal was kindled which bore Columba and his disciples over so large a portion of Europe in the execution of their great mission. Queen Margaret had seen the Culdee pastors, in their wattle-built and rush-thatched cells, celebrating their supper at wooden tables; this, said she, is not worship, it is barbarism; she would show them a better way. Summoning her masons, a superb church arose; calling her craftsmen, curiously fashioned vessels of gold and silver were forthcoming; assembling her ladies, it was marvellous in how short a time stores of richly embroidered vestments, meet for priestly shoulders, were fabricated; a staff of priests completed Margaret's preparations for banishing the "barbarous" customs of the Culdees, and replacing them with the elegant services of a church in which it was her wish to fold the Scots.

It is a universal law that when the vital principle in an organism grows weak and begins to decay, the body transfers its vitalities to the surface, and covers itself with new growths. This is an effort to stave off approaching

dissolution. The forest tree, when its root is old and its trunk begins to be rotten, unwilling to yield up its place and disappear from the forest, sends forth with a sudden effort young shoots and branches to hide the rottenness of its stem, or it woos some parasitic plant which clothes it with a greenness not its own. Instead of death, the tree seems to be renewing its youth. The expiring lamp will unexpectedly blaze up, and fill the chamber it is about to leave in darkness with a sudden gleam of light. In obedience to the same law, worn out races, with the sentence of extinction hanging over them, will suddenly burst into an unexpected prolificness, and multiply their numbers in proportion as the constituents of their corporate existence die out. This, too, is an effort of nature to ward off death.

The same law holds good in bodies ecclesiastical. When the inner and vital principle of religion in churches is stricken with incipient decay, there is sure to come an outward efflorescence of ceremonies and rites. This fungus growth, which is so apt to overrun churches which have sunk into spiritual decay, and to give to their withered age the aspect of efflorescent youth, is analogous to the herbage and moss that convert the rotten trunk into a seeming garland, and deceive the eye with an appearance of health while deadly disease is preying upon the plant. A church, vigorous and strong at the core, conscious of inward health and power, is content to abide in the calm path of prescribed duty, and to feed its piety and zeal by the appointed acts of spiritual worship. It eschews spasmodic effort and ostentatious profession. They are felt not to be needed, and therefore are not sought. But when inward decay sets in, then it is that exterior helps and supports are had recourse to. The quiet that is indicative of peace is exchanged for outward bustle and parade. The acceptability of worship to the Deity is believed to be



in the ratio of the grandeur of the temple in which it is performed, and the worshippers, unable to transact directly with the skies, are fain to employ the mediation of consecrated altars, apostolically descended priests, and rites of mystic virtue and æsthetic beauty. "The age," say the onlookers, "how pious it is! The Church, how her activity and zeal are awakening!" It is a mistake. What appears a marvelous outburst of religious life is only the vitalities smitten at the heart rushing to the extremities, dying piety concealing its decay under the guise of a fictitious energy. The sun has gone below the horizon, and there comes the afterglow on the mountains which is the harbinger of the coming darkness.

The last years of Malcolm III. and Queen Margaret were clouded with calamity. We have already traced the story of the terrible wars waged between England and Scotland in the early part of Malcolm's reign. At length a peace was established betwixt the two kingdoms, of which the public signatory was the stone cross on Stanmoor common. That peace remained unbroken while Malcolm was occupied with the ecclesiastical reforms of which his queen had taught him to be enamoured. Meanwhile a great change had taken place in England. William the Conqueror had gone to the grave. He was succeeded on the throne by his son, William Rufus. The new English king had different tastes and pursuits from those of his royal father, and also from those of his brother monarch of Scotland. There is the less likelihood on that account, one should think, of the two sovereigns coming into collision. But no; the master passions of the age, ambition and war, once more assert themselves, and compel the sword to leave its scabbard. The cause of quarrel is obscure. The two border provinces of Cumbria and Lothian were fruitful in misunderstandings; and the



pretensions of Edgar Aetheling, Queen Margaret's brother, to the English throne, strained at times the relations between the two kings. Whether the strife grew out of these matters or had its rise in another cause will now never be known. Let it suffice that in the old doomed borderland we find the Scotch and English armies again confronting one another. King Malcolm, with his two sons, Edward and Eadgar, had penetrated into England, and were besieging the Castle of Alnwick. Robert de Mowbray and his men-at-arms rushed suddenly out upon them, and in the onset King Malcolm and his elder son Edward were slain.<sup>1</sup> The Scottish army, dispirited by the fall of the king, broke up in disorder, many falling by the sword, while numbers were drowned in the River Alne, then swollen by the winter rains. Next day the body of Malcolm was found among the slain by two peasants who had visited the field. Placing the royal corpse in a cart, they conveyed it to Tynemouth, and there buried it. It was afterwards disinterred by his son Alexander, and laid beside that of his queen at Dunfermline. Malcolm did not receive sepulture in Iona; as in life, so in death, he was separate from the Church of Columba. He died on the 19th November 1093, having reigned thirty-five years.

Escaping from the battlefield, Eadgar carried to his mother the tidings of the death of her husband and son. Queen Margaret now lay dying in the Castle of Edinburgh. Turgot gives us a very touching account of her last days, as reported to him by the priest whom he had left to minister to her on her death-bed. Margaret, in our judgment,

<sup>1</sup> John Major says that a soldier offered him the keys of the castle on the point of a spear, and that Malcolm, approaching incautiously to receive them, was pierced through the eye. *Historia de gestis Scottorum*, Lib. iii. cap. 8.

appears at her best when she comes to die. She has now done with fastings and feet-washings, and, as a penitent, turns her eye to the cross, which, let us hope, she saw despite the many obstructions—helps she deemed them—which she had industriously piled up betwixt her soul and the Saviour. Her earnest simple utterances, her tears, the psalms now so sweet to her, and the promises of Holy Scripture turned by her into prayers, give us a higher idea of her piety, and pourtray more truly her character, we are persuaded, than the high-wrought encomiums of Turgot, in which he claims for Queen Margaret an all but perfect holiness.

Margaret had been ailing for half a year. And now in her sick chamber on the Castle rock, lonely and anxious, she could not help following in imagination her husband and sons to the fateful fields of Northumbria, and picturing to herself what was destined to be but too literally realized. On the fourth day before that on which there came news from the battlefield—the very day on which the king fell—Margaret's forebodings of some near calamity were so strong that she could not refrain from communicating them to her attendants. "Perhaps," said she, "on this very day such a heavy calamity may befall the realm of Scotland as has not been for many ages past." "The disease gained ground, and death was imminent," says Turgot's informer. "Her face had already grown pallid in death, when she directed that I, and the other ministers of the sacred altar along with me, should stand near her and commend her soul to Christ by our psalms. Moreover, she asked that there should be brought to her a cross, called the 'Black Cross,' which she always held in the greatest veneration. . . . When at last it was got out of the chest and brought to her, she received it with reverence, and did her best to embrace it and kiss it,



and several times she signed herself with it. Although every part of her body was now growing cold, still as long as the warmth of life throbbed at her heart she continued steadfast in prayer. She repeated the whole of the fiftieth psalm,<sup>1</sup> and placing the cross before her eyes, she held it there with both her hands."

It was at this moment that Eadgar, just arrived from the battle, entered her bedroom. The shock of his message was more, he saw, than the emaciated frame before him could sustain. He forbore to speak it. But Margaret read it in her son's face. "I know it, my boy," she said, with a deep sigh, "I know it." She now prepared for instant departure. She at once began the prayer in the liturgy of the mass, saying, "Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to the will of the Father, through the co-operation of the Holy Ghost, hast by Thy death given life to the world, deliver me." "As she was saying the words 'deliver me,'" says the narrator, "her soul was freed from the chains of the body, and departed to Christ, the author of true liberty."<sup>2</sup> She breathed her last on the 16th November 1093, just four days after her husband had fallen in battle on the banks of the Alne, Northumbria.<sup>3</sup>

The morning and the evening of Margaret's life were alike darkened by heavy clouds, between which there shone forth a noon of singular brilliancy. She exhibited amid the strong lights and shadows of her career an admirable equanimity of soul and great stability of character. She was large of heart, capacious of intellect, more studious of the happiness of

<sup>1</sup> May not this be a mistake for the fifty-first psalm?

<sup>2</sup> Turgot, *Life of St Margaret*, pp. 75-79.

<sup>3</sup> Fordun says Margaret died in Edinburgh "*in castro puellarum*," according to the Chronicle of Mailross. Wynton says the same in his *Origynale Cronikil*, placing her death "In-til the Castelle of Edynburgh."



others than of her own, and wholly devoted to a country on the shore of which she had stepped as a fugitive and exile, when a chivalrous prince took her by the hand, and led her to a seat beside himself on the throne of his realm. She repaid his generous love by her wise counsels, and her efforts to refine and elevate the manners of his court, and improve the dress, the dwellings, and the trading relations of his subjects.

But if we would form a just estimate of the influence of Margaret for good or for evil on Scotland, we must enlarge our view, and take other considerations into account besides her personal virtues and the ephemeral benefits which sprang out of them. These are "the good," which the poet tells us, is interred with men's bones, but they may be conjoined with the "evil" that lives after them. The course of a nation may be fatally, although imperceptibly, altered, and only after the lapse of centuries can the nature of the revolution it has undergone be rightly understood, and its disastrous issues duly measured. Margaret and Scotland are an exemplification of this. Had Margaret brought with her a love for the scriptural faith and simple worship of the Scots, the nation to its latest age would have called the day blessed on which she set foot on its soil. Unhappily she cherished a deep-seated prejudice against the Scottish religion, and, believing that she was doing an acceptable service, she strove to supplant it. The revolution she inaugurated was at war with the traditions of the nation, was opposed to the genius of the people, and while it did not make the Scots good Catholics, it made them bad Christians. The system of irrational beliefs which Queen Margaret introduced destroyed intelligence and fettered conscience, and so paved the way for the entrance of feudal slavery by which it was followed, and which flourished in Scotland along with

it. It is noteworthy that Roman Catholicism and the feudal system came together. The fundamental principles of the Roman Church, it has been remarked by the historian Robertson, "prepare and break the mind for political servitude, which is the firmest foundation of civil tyranny."<sup>1</sup>

No finer spectacle can we wish to contemplate than Queen Margaret, if we restrict our view to her shining virtues and her heroic austerities. She is seen moving like a being from another sphere in Malcolm's court, meek, gracious, loving, and maintaining her stedfast mind alike amid the storms that raged around her in her youth, the splendours that shone upon her in her mid-day, and the deep, dark shadows that again gathered about her at the close. But we must not sacrifice our judgment at the shrine of sentiment, nor so fix our gaze upon the passing glory of a moment as not to see what comes after. When we turn from Margaret the woman to Margaret the queen, and trace the workings of her policy beyond the brief period of her life onward into the subsequent centuries, we forget the radiant vision in the darkness of the picture that now rises to our view. It is the spectacle of a land overspread by ignorance, of a priesthood wealthy, profligate, and dominant, and a people sunk in the degrading worship of fetishes. Such issue had the changes which were initiated in Scotland by Queen Margaret.

Margaret had added a kingdom to the empire of the Papacy, but an hundred and fifty years passed away before Rome acknowledged the gift. We do not blame her for being so tardy in bestowing her honours where they were so well deserved; we rather view the fact as corroborative in part of what we have ventured to suggest, even, that the changes effected by Margaret were not very perceptible or marked in her own day, and that it was not till a century and a half

<sup>1</sup> Robertson's *History of Scotland*, ii. 183.

What Rome was able to estimate the magnitude of the service rendered by the Scottish Queen. At length in the year 1250, under Pope Innocent IV., Queen Margaret received the honour of canonization. It is for services, not graces, that Rome reserves her highest rewards. Margaret might have been as fair as Helen, or as learned as Hypatia or Olympia Morata; she might have been as pious as the mother of Augustine, or as virtuous as the wife of the Roman Poetus; but unless she had enlarged the bounds of the Papal sway by the addition of a great kingdom, a place among "those who reign in heaven" would never have been assigned her by those whose prerogative it is to say who shall sit on the thrones of the Papal Valhalla.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

A.D. 1093—1124.

DONALD BANE—KING EADGAR—ALEXANDER I.—ALEXANDER'S BATTLE WITH THE BISHOPS—ALEXANDER'S VOW AND MONASTERY OF INCHCOLM.

THERE comes what appears another breakdown in the affairs of the Scots. Malcolm Canmore and his queen are dead, and the throne is vacant. The same year (1093) died Fothad, Bishop of St Andrews, the last of the Columban bishops, leaving vacant the chief ecclesiastical seat of the kingdom. We behold both Church and State in Scotland at this hour without a head; and, what was strange, there could not be got at the moment either monarch for the empty throne, or bishop for the vacant see. This two-fold vacancy is surprising when we take into account that Malcolm had left behind him numerous sons, and that Margaret had made it the chief business of her life to place the ecclesiastical arrangements of her kingdom on what she deemed a proper footing. This position of affairs was contrary to every forecast, and not more disappointing than it was dangerous to the peace of the kingdom.

Symptoms are not wanting that the popularity of the reigning family had of late been on the wane, and that the attachment of the nation to the throne was weakening. On the death of the king we expect to see the Scots take the eldest surviving son of Malcolm, Eadgar, conduct him to

Scone, and there anoint him as king. Under the existing law Eadgar was the undoubted heir of the crown. So far from doing so, the Scots elected as king the brother of the late monarch, Donald Bane, or Donald the White, the heir under the old but now abrogated law of the royal succession. Donald Bane is said to have seized the throne, but this he could not have done unless there had been a powerful party in the nation in his favour. This we know there was, and we know also that they made it a reason for rejecting the son and choosing the brother of the late king that Malcolm "had corrupted the discipline of their ancestors."<sup>1</sup> By adopting the measures of his queen, Malcolm had given offence to the Columban sentiment of the He had roused a feeling which, though latent during his lifetime, showed itself now that he was dead. Neither Malcolm's valour nor Margaret's virtues could make the Scots condone the suppression of their ancient church. This policy nearly cost Malcolm's posterity the throne of Scotland. In truth they did lose it for a time; and if they came again to possess it, they owed their recovery of it not to any spontaneous or repentant movement on the part of the nation, but to the interposition of the arms of England.

Apart altogether from considerations of religion, the policy of Malcolm Canmore and his queen was pernicious and destructive. It turned the Scots backward on their steps, and set them moving on a path which for them could have no ending but chaos. It struck at the roots of their unity by destroying that which was pre-eminently and before all other things the cement and bond of their nation. It effaced those traditions which were a record of great actions already performed, and a perpetual inspiration to still greater achieve-

<sup>1</sup> *Buchanan, Hist. Scot., Lib. vii. c. 87.*

ments in time to come, traditions which had made grooves for thought and channels for action, and which had stamped on the nation its strong individuality, to lose which would be to lose its manliness ; traditions, in fine, which formed the landmarks of the path by which the Scots must advance if their future was to be worthy of their past. Malcolm's policy crushed out all these moulding and inspiring footprints. No wonder that the Scots halted four centuries on their march. But it is not Malcolm alone who must bear the blame. The shepherds of the people slumbered at their post. The nation, there is reason to think, had become apathetic, and slumbered on while being enclosed in the net of Rome and the chains of feudal slavery.

The years during which Donald Bane occupied the throne were years of strife and wretchedness. He had reigned only six months when he was expelled from his seat by Duncan, a son of Malcolm by his first marriage. Recovering it after a year, Donald Bane reigned other three years, when he was finally driven from the throne, and Eadgar, the son of Malcolm, got possession of it, partly by armed assistance which his uncle, Edgar Aetheling, who still lived, had influence to obtain from the English monarch.

With Eadgar, whom we now see on the throne of Scotland (1097), returned the policy of his father and mother. He encouraged the Saxon and Norman nobles to settle in his kingdom, dowering them with lands, and placing them in posts of influence. This gave umbrage to his Scottish subjects, as it had done in the days of Malcolm his father, being one of the causes which helped to draw away the hearts of the Scots from his house and dynasty. The measures pursued by father and son refined the manners of the Scots and introduced a change of speech, the Gaelic now beginning to fall into disuse, and the Saxon, that is, the lowland Scotch, to come in its room.



These benefits, however, had attendant upon them certain drawbacks which fully counterbalanced them. With the Saxon tongue came Saxon institutions, and exotic plants are seldom so vigorous or so valuable as native growths.

Eadgar was an amiable man, but a weak ruler. He possessed in prominent degree that one of his mother's qualities, which was the least estimable of all her many endowments. He had a superstitious piety. This proved a source of emolument to the monks, and led Eadgar to give himself to the pious and congenial work of the restoration of monasteries, among which was Coldingham, which had been destroyed by the Danes. At the same time he gave the town of Swinton to the monks of St Cuthbert, and imposed on the men of Coldinghamshire an annual tax of half a mark of silver for each plough.<sup>1</sup> Edgar reigned nine years, and died without issue. We dismiss rapidly those kings in whose breasts an English education and the adoption of an alien faith had corrupted if not extinguished the Scottish heart.

Alexander, another of Margaret's sons, next mounted the throne (1107). Alexander possessed in even more eminent degree than his brother Edgar his mother's characteristic piety, but he did not add thereto, like Edgar, her gracious disposition. His impetuous and savage temper procured for him among his contemporaries the epithet of "fierce." "He was," says Ailred, Abbot of Rivaux, who was his cotemporary, "affable and humble to the monks and clergy, but inexpressibly terrible to his other subjects." When the report of his great sanctity reached the Highlands, some young nobles, believing that they had a man of the "cowl" on the throne, thought the occasion fitting for settling their unadjusted quarrels. The immediate result was an outbreak of violence. But they were speedily undeceived by the arrival of

<sup>1</sup> *National MSS.*, Part i. p. 5; *Skene's Celtic Scotland*, ii. 367.

Alexander amongst them. A few swift and crushing strokes made these turbulent spirits glad to be at peace with their sovereign, and on terms of good neighbourhood amongst themselves. This display of vigour at the opening of his reign procured for himself and his kingdom tranquillity during the rest of his life.

Alexander's energy was now turned into another channel. The exaltation of the church was henceforward the one object to which his labours were devoted. The church, however, which Alexander wished to edify and exalt was not the old church of his ancestors, but the new church which his mother Margaret had set up in Scotland. Nor were his ways of working the old Columban methods, viz., transcribing the Scriptures and circulating them among his subjects; they were the newer modes imported from Rome, which consisted mainly in the intervention of a body of priests, who could open the kingdom of heaven, and bestow grace and salvation on men by rites known only to themselves, or at least efficacious only in their hands. Alexander made every provision for the suitable and honourable maintenance of men whose services were so inestimable. He rebuilt the church of St Michael at Scone, and planted there a colony of canons regular of St Augustine (1115) known as black canons, which he and his Queen Sibylla, daughter of Henry I. of England, had brought from St Oswald's monastery, near Pontefract.<sup>1</sup> He completed the Abbey of Dunfermline, which his father had begun, and greatly enriched its resources. He gifted, moreover, the church of St Andrews, already wealthy, with the lands of Boar-rink, so called from a dreadful boar, the terror of the neighbourhood, which was said to infest these parts. Winton has described the characteristic ceremony which accompanied the gift. The king's

<sup>1</sup> Fordun, *Scotichron.*, v. 37.



"comely steede of Araby," magnificently accoutred, was led up to the high altar, and his Turkish armour, his shield, and his lance of silver were presented to the church.<sup>1</sup>

The See of St Andrews may be said to have ceased by this time to be a Columban institution without having become formally a Roman one. It was in a state of transition, occasioning great uneasiness and trouble to Alexander I. The plan of Romanising the Scottish Church was far from proceeding smoothly; difficulties were springing up at every step. After the death of Bishop Fothad, who, as we have seen, went to his grave in the same year as Malcolm and Margaret, the See of St Andrews remained vacant for fourteen years. None of the native clergy, it would seem, were willing to accept the dignity, and the chair went begging. This shows, we think, how far the Columban clergy were from sympathising with the innovations of Queen Margaret, and that the Columban element still retained considerable strength in the nation. At last Turgot, whom we have already met in the Dunfermline conference, was chosen by Alexander I. to be Bishop of St Andrews. Turgot was of Saxon descent; his career had been a chequered one, nor did his election to the episcopal chair bring him a more peaceful life, for now the Archbishop of York and King Alexander began quarrelling over his consecration. The Archbishop claimed the right to consecrate as the ecclesiastical superior of Scotland, which, he affirmed, lay within his province of York. The king refused to acknowledge this claim of jurisdiction, and Turgot's consecration stood over for some years. At last an expedient was hit upon. That expedient was the reservation of the rights of both sees, and the consecration was proceeded with. It was now that the first step was taken towards the suppres-

<sup>1</sup> Winton, i. 285, 286.



sion of the Culdees. To Turgot on his appointment as bishop was given power over all their establishments. "In his days," we read, "the whole rights of the *Keledei* over the whole kingdom of Scotland passed to the bishopric of St Andrews." His brief occupancy of office prevented Turgot using this power, and for some time longer the Culdees were left in the undisturbed possession of their rights and heritages.<sup>1</sup> Turgot found his new dignity beset with difficulties. Misunderstandings sprang up between him and the king, and, after a year's occupancy of his see, he resigned it, and went back to Durham, where he was content to discharge the office of prior, which he had held before he quitted that abbey to assume the mitre of St Andrews. He did not long survive his retirement. He died in 1115.<sup>2</sup>

There came another long vacancy in the see of St Andrews. At last in the year 1120, Alexander turned his eyes to Canterbury in quest of a new bishop, but only to verify the saying that "one may go farther and fare worse." The Scottish monarch believed that now he would be rid of the battle of the two jurisdictions. The nearer See of York had claimed the supremacy of the Scottish Church, but the more distant Canterbury, Alexander thought, would advance no such claim. There was no instance on record of an Archbishop of Canterbury having consecrated a Bishop of St Andrews, or of having claimed the right of doing so. Accordingly King Alexander wrote to Ralph, Archbishop of Canterbury, requesting him to send him a suitable person for his vacant See of Scotland, for the Bishop of St Andrews was still the one bishop in Scotland; theoretically it was the primacy of Iona transferred to St Andrews. On receipt

<sup>1</sup> Reeves, *British Culdees*, p. 36; Stubb's and Haddan's *Councils*, p. 178.

<sup>2</sup> *Chronica de Mailros*, p. 65; *Simeon of Durham*, p. 208.

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of the letter, Archbishop Ralph despatched Eadmer, a monk of Canterbury, to the Scottish monarch. Eadmer was a disciple of the great Anselm, and fully shared his master's exalted views of the church's jurisdiction, which had oftener than once brought down upon him the frown of his sovereign, and compelled him to quit the kingdom. On Eadmer's arrival in Scotland, the king soon discovered that he should have to fight the old battle of jurisdiction over again, only in a more acute form. Turgot's pretensions menaced the independence of the Scottish Church, but the pretensions of Eadmer struck at the independence of the Scottish kingdom.

First came the investiture of the new bishop. Eadmer refused to submit to lay investiture, by accepting the ring and crozier from the hands of the king. The dispute was settled by a compromise. The bishop-elect took the ring from the king in token of subjection to Alexander in temporals. The crozier was laid on the altar, and taken thence by Eadmer himself, in token of his independence in spirituals. Next came the question of consecration, which was a still more crucial one. Eadmer insisted on being consecrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury, resting his plea on the allegation that the See of Canterbury held the primacy over the whole of the British Islands. Canterbury had been the See of Augustine, whom the Pope sent to England with full powers, and who in virtue thereof claimed to govern with equal authority on both sides of the Tweed, and to be the spiritual autocrat of the whole island. The Scottish king had penetration to see what this claim amounted to, and the anomalous condition into which it would bring his kingdom. Scotland would present the contradictory spectacle of political independence and ecclesiastical bondage. This state of things would issue in no long time in the destruction of both liberties, and the supremacy of the King of England, as well as of the



Archbishop of Canterbury, over the kingdom of Scotland. Although the spirit of his mother was strong in him, Alexander was not prepared to make a concession like this to priestly arrogance.

At an interview one day between the king and the bishop, the matter was abruptly and conclusively brought to an issue. Eadmer was pressing for permission to go to Canterbury and receive consecration at the hands of Archbishop Ralph. Alexander protested in plain terms that he would never permit the Scottish bishop to be subject to the primate of England. "Not for all Scotland," replied Eadmer, "will I renounce being a monk of Canterbury." "In that case," rejoined the king, "I have gained nothing by applying to Canterbury for a bishop." The haughty monk gave the ring back to the king, from whom he had received it, and laid the crozier on the altar whence he had taken it with his own hand, and quitted the kingdom.

The monk of Canterbury had shaken the dust from his feet and was gone, but Alexander's troubles in connection with his bishopric of St Andrews were not yet at an end. He made other two attempts to fill the vacant see. Fordun has given us two obscure names chosen in succession by the king for the dignity, but in each case the bishop-elect died before consecration. Verily the epithet "fatal" may with more propriety be applied to the "chair" of St Andrews than to the "stone" of Scone. Death or calamity dogs the steps of all who have to do with it. We have seen King Alexander nominate four men to this spiritual throne, and only one of the four has been able to mount into it, and he for only a single year. A fifth and final attempt does the king make to find a bishop. His choice now fell on the prior of the Augustine monks, which we have seen him establish at Scone. Prior Robert of the Augustines was



an Englishman, but, knowing his character and qualifications, the king thought the selection a safe one. He was consecrated in 1124 by the Archbishop of York, the rights of both sees being reserved as in the case of Bishop Turgot.

Considering how much vexation Alexander had had with his one Bishop of St Andrews, we should have thought that he would have been careful not to multiply functionaries which were apt, once installed, to kick against the power that created them. Such, however, was not the inference which the king drew from his experience of the ways of bishops. Instead of diminishing he increased their number. To his one bishopric of St Andrews he added the dioceses of Moray and Dunkeld. Of the persons appointed to these sees we know nothing besides their names. The northern diocese of Moray was presided over by Gregorius, while Cormac ruled at Dunkeld. We hear of no disputes respecting jurisdiction arising in either diocese, from which we infer that the holders of these Celtic sees were more subservient to the royal will than the more powerful and less manageable Bishop of St Andrews.

The reign of Alexander I. was now drawing to its close; still he did not relax, but rather quickened his efforts to realise the programme of ecclesiastical change which his mother had devised but did not live to carry out. To make St Andrews the Canterbury of Scotland, as Canterbury was the Rome of England, was the object of his devout ambition. He ceased not with edifying diligence to found monasteries, to import foreign monks,—the soil of Scotland not being adapted as yet for the rearing of that special product,—to collect relics, to provide vestments for the priests, and vessels for the service of the churches. As the result of Alexander's pious and unremitting labours, the land began to be cleansed from the stains which five centuries of Columban heterodoxy

had left on it. Morning and night its air was hallowed by the soft chimes of mattins and vespers rising from convent or cell, and floating over wood and hamlet. Its roads began to be sanctified by the holy feet of palmer and pilgrim, shod and unshod ; and its streets and rural lanes to be variegated by troops of reverend men, cowled and uncowed, in frock of white, or black, or grey, begirt with rope, and having rosary hung at their girdle, as men who were habitually watchful unto prayer, and ready to respond to any sudden access of the devotional mood which might demand expression, and had all the implements at hand to ban or bless, to sanctify the living or shrive the dying. The long severed land, putting off its Columban weeds and decking itself in Roman attire, was making ready to be received in the next reign into the great Church of the West.

Among the last of the pious labours of Alexander was one undertaken in fulfilment of a vow which he had made in circumstances of great peril. The king was crossing the Forth at Queensferry on business of State, when a violent gale sprang up in the south-west and carried his vessel down the firth. The fury of the tempest was such that the king and his attendants gave themselves up for lost. While tossed by the waves, the king made a vow to St Columba, promising the saint, if he should bring him safe to the island of Aemona (Inchcolm), which the sailors were toiling to reach, he would erect there a monument which should be a lasting proof of gratitude to his protector, and a harbour and refuge to tempest-tossed and shipwrecked mariners. His prayers were heard, as he believed, for soon to his glad surprise and that of his attendants, Aemona was reached. The king on landing was welcomed by an eremite, who was the sole inhabitant of the island. This man's whole subsistence was the milk of a single cow, and the shell-fish



picked from the rocks or gathered on the sea-shore. These dainties the king and his attendants were content to share with the solitary during the three days the storm kept them prisoners on the island. Such is the story as told by Bower, Abbot of Inchcolme, who saw a miracle in the storm that led to the founding of the monastery. We may accept the facts without granting the miracle.

After his departure from the island, the pious king did according to his vow. He laid the foundations of a monastery on Aemona, and dedicated it to St Columba, by whose powerful interposition he had been rescued from perishing in the tempest. He had not the satisfaction, however, of seeing the edifice completed, for he died in the following year (1124), and it fell to the lot of his successor, David I., to carry out the intentions and fulfil the vow of Alexander.<sup>1</sup> No more grateful task could King David I. have had assigned him. The building was prosecuted with diligence. In due course a noble pile graced the rock which had given shelter to Alexander from the waves. A body of Augustinian canons were brought hither and put in possession, and so amply endowed was the monastery with lands in various parts of the kingdom, that there was not the least danger of its inmates ever being reduced to the necessity of going in quest of shell-fish to eke out their subsistence, as the solitary had been obliged to do whom the king found on the island when cast upon it by the storm. In the year 1178 the

<sup>1</sup> The researches of Dr William Ross in the charters of the Monastery of Inchcolme and the Donibristle MS. make it undoubted that the monastery was founded by Alexander I. in 1023. "Statements," says Dr Ross, "are to be found in the charters of the Monastery, which point to possessions owned by the canons as far back as the reign of Alexander the First."—*Aberdour and Inchcolme: Being Historical Notices of the Parish and Monastery.* By the Rev. William Ross, LL.D. Edin., 1885, p. 61. A work which contains much interesting, curious, and original information regarding the Monastery of Inchcolme.



monastery was confirmed by a Bull of Pope Alexander the Third. In his Bull the Pope takes "the church of St Colme's Inch under our protection, and that of St Peter." There follows a long list of privileges and heritages—lands, churches, tofts, multures, fishings—all of which the Bull of Pope Alexander secures to the monastery in perpetuity.<sup>1</sup>

Scotland's obligations to this monastery are considerable. In the year 1418 we find Walter Bower occupying its chair as abbot, for though at first Inchcolme was a priory, it ultimately became an abbey. Eschewing the pomps and pleasures which his rank as abbot put within his reach, Bower gave his time to labours which have been fruitful to his country. He was the continuator of Fordun's *Scotichronicon*, indeed the compiler of the better half of it, a work which is one of the sources of Scottish history. He was a man of true piety, despite the superstitions that flourished all round him. He saw a miracle in the storm which led to the founding of his monastery, but we excuse him when we read his tender and pathetic words. Writing of the year 1385, he says: "In this same year, I, who have composed these sentences, and who throughout the first books am called *Scriptor*, was born into the world. Oh! that I might ere long leave it in purity. I die daily, seeing every day a part

<sup>1</sup> Inchcolme was visited and explored by Sir James Simpson. The great physician, it is well known, relieved the strain of professional duty by occasional and successful incursions into the antiquarian field. We find Dr William Roes saying: "A small building in the garden of the Abbey has lately attracted a good deal of notice, and has even gone through something like restoration, in the belief that it is the identical oratory in which the Columban eremite worshipped before the monastery was founded. It was through the enlightened antiquarian zeal of Sir James Simpson that this discovery was made. On architectural grounds, some of the highest authorities on such matters have acquiesced in the conclusion come to by Sir James. And on the supposition that they are correct, the little chapel is probably the oldest stone-roofed building in Scotland."—Ross, *Aberdour and Inchcolme: Being Historical Notices of the Parish and Monastery*, p. 58. Edin., 1885.

of my life is taken away. I have passed through five of the great periods of man's life ; and it seems to me as if the time past of my life had glided away as yesterday ; and while I spend this very day I divide it with death."

A yet higher distinction may the Monastery of Inchcolme claim : it gave a martyr to the Reformation. Thomas Forret, better known as the Vicar of Dollar, was one of the canons of Inchcolme. His pure character, his benevolent life, and his tragic fate, have invested his memory with a touching interest. While in the monastery, unlikely as the place was, he lighted on a spring, the waters of which were sweeter than any he had tasted heretofore. The circumstances attending this discovery were far enough from giving promise of any such blissful result as that to which they ultimately led. A dispute had broken out between the canons and the abbot, the former affirming that the latter had fraudulently deprived them of a portion of their daily maintenance. The Foundation Book of the monastery was appealed to. The book was produced, and the canons fell to searching this charter of their rights, not doubting that it would enable them to make good their plea against their abbot. The abbot, however, had the art to wile the book from the canons and to give them instead a volume of Augustine. Forret gave himself diligently to the reading of this book, and found in it what was infinitely more precious to him than if it had made him abbot of Inchcolme and of every monastery in the kingdom to boot. He saw in it the Way of Life, through the obedience and blood of Jesus Christ. Forret sought to communicate to his brother canons a knowledge of his great discovery, that they too might repair to the same fountain and partake with him of the heavenly joys. The abbot took alarm ; he saw the plague of heresy about to break out in his community. The Monastery of

Inchcolme, of so ancient and orthodox a lineage, a school of Lutheranism! Rather the waves should cover it, or war raze it to its foundations, than that the stigma of heresy should be affixed to it. The abbot, however, gave Forret an honourable dismissal. He sent him to serve the landward Church of Dollar, where he might vent his Lutheran notions in the sequestered air of the Ochils without bringing an evil report upon his monastery. The sequel is well known. The Vicar of Dollar preached the doctrine of a free justification to his parishioners of the valley of the Devon, and after a brief ministry he sealed his doctrine with his blood at the stake. The glory of the Monastery of Inchcolme is, not that it had a king for its founder, but that it had a Walter Bower in the list of its abbots, a volume of Augustine in its library, and, last and highest, a Thomas Forret among its canons.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

A.D. 1124—1139.

DAVID I. AND NEW AGE IN EUROPE—DAVID'S PERSONAL QUALITIES AND HABITS — WAR TO RESTORE THE ANGLO-SAXON LINE IN ENGLAND—BATTLE OF THE STANDARD.

ALEXANDER dying without issue, David, the youngest of the sons of Malcolm Canmore and Queen Margaret, ascended the throne (1124). The accession of David synchronises with a great epoch in the history of Europe. For some centuries the ecclesiastical authority had been slowly but steadily gaining upon the civil power, and undermining its foundations. Under the insidious working of the former, the sphere within which kings were to exercise their authority and nations their independence was continually narrowing, and all the while the spiritual was as constantly widening the limits of its jurisdiction, and boldly pushing its arrogant claims to absolute and supreme sovereignty.

These lofty pretensions it based on its higher origin and nature. It was spiritual, and must take precedence of what was temporal; it was from heaven, and must therefore govern, and not be governed by what was merely terrestrial. It claimed, in fact, to be able to produce in writing a divine charter, setting it over the whole of mundane society, and commanding kings and all in authority to be obedient to it. When it found that it could not obtain the submission of

men simply by the dogmatic proclamation of this vast prerogative it had recourse to the sword. The prolonged and sanguinary conflict to which this claim gave rise is known in history as "the war of the mitre against the 'empire.'" This war was waged betwixt the pontiffs of Italy and the emperors of Germany. Nevertheless although these were the two powers immediately concerned, there was not a kingdom in Europe that had not a stake in the controversy, seeing what was aimed at was the subordination of the civil magistracy all over Christendom, and the installation of a spiritual magistracy in its room, with its centre and head at Rome. This was what lay under the claim of the pontiff to the investiture of bishops. It seemed plausible and right that the spiritual monarch of Christendom should appoint his spiritual prefects and magistrates throughout all his dominions, but a moment's reflection will show us that this arrangement lodged the government of Christendom, temporal and spiritual, in one centre, and that centre the papal chair.

This great war had ended in the triumph of the mitre. It is not easy to take in all at once the dimensions of this revolution. It had turned the world upside down. For some centuries to come the *church* and not the *empire* was to be the ruler of the nations. Kings and emperors were to be subject to pontiffs and bishops. The "church" was to have full freedom to display what of power was in her for good or for evil. For this end a large measure of time, as well as power was accorded her. The struggle she had waged had brought her dominion, not for a few years, but for three centuries, and if her fitness to reign was at all what she pretended it to be, how great the happiness in store for the world! The church was to stand at the helm during the currency of these happy centuries. Laymen were

to withdraw their unholy hands from the administration of affairs. They did so. Century after century the laity fell more and more into the background, while the ecclesiastical caste came to the front, and blossomed into power and wealth and grandeur and great dominion.

It was just when this revolution had been accomplished, and only a few years after the pontiff to whose daring and genius it was owing, had gone to the tomb that David came to the throne of Scotland. Did he find his northern kingdom untouched by this revolution? Remote from Rome, and the seat of a church which for five centuries had protested against her assumptions, one might have indulged the hope that Scotland had escaped the spirit of change that was abroad. But no; the theocratic element pervaded the air of all Christendom. It had reached the shores of Scotland before David took possession of its throne. Its first entrance was with the monk Egbert, through whom Rome won her first victory in our country, when her emissary prevailed on the elders of Iona to bow their heads and receive her tonsure—a little rite but of vast significance, as are all the rites of Rome. The door thus set ajar was thrown wide open by Queen Margaret. The pope had crept stealthily into the chair of Columba under Egbert, covering the tiara with the cowl. Under Margaret he walked in openly and planted his jurisdiction at the heart of the kingdom, though not without opposition and remonstrance. And last of all came King David to complete the change which his mother had inaugurated.

Before entering on what was the great event of David's reign, and the great labour of his life, let us contemplate him as a man and as a king. He is undoubtedly one of the best of our early princes. In the long line of our monarchs there are few figures that draw the eye so powerfully to them,



or that reward its gaze by imparting so much pleasure. In David some of the best qualities of his mother live over again. As a [man he is capable and sagacious. He is healthy in his tastes and amusements. He has sunk nothing of his manhood in the prince: he is courteous in manners, benevolent in disposition; like his mother he cares for the poor, but his compassion and charity do not take the form of those menial personal services in which Margaret so delighted, and which while they made such heavy demands on her time and strength, did but little, we fear, to diminish the pauperism of her husband's dominions. History has no vice of which to accuse him. It records against him no dishonoured friendships, no violated pledges, no desecrated family or social ties. He was unstained by treachery or cowardice. He shunned the enticements of the wine cup, and he kept himself uncontaminated by the baser passions in which too many monarchs have sunk character and manhood.

King David was a lover of justice. So far as he could help it, no one of his subjects should have cause to say that he had been wronged in judgment. He put his own hand to the work. Though one of the most onerous, anxious, and responsible of the functions of royalty, he did not roll over on his judges the entire burden of the administration of the laws. He shared the labour with them, making justice all the sweeter, and it might be the purer, that it came direct from the royal hand. The sentence was the more welcome and the more sacred that the royal mouth had spoken it. And he was a patient and painstaking administrator. We see him sitting at the gates of his palace waiting there to give audience to the humblest subject, and pronounce judgment in the humblest cause.

David inherited the Norman passion for the chase. It

was absolute exhilaration to him to vault into the saddle on a crisp September morning, and uncoupling hound and falcon, to ride away, followed by his attendants, through forest and moor, in pursuit of hart and roe, and wild boar. At the call of duty, however, he could forego this dearly loved sport. It would happen at times, so says his contemporary and biographer, Abbot Ailred, when the king was in the saddle and the hawks unleashed for a day's hunting, that there would come a suitor craving audience of him. The gracious sovereign would instantly dismount, lead the applicant into his closet, and patiently listen while he explained and enforced his suit. The steeds were led back to the stable, hound and hawk were returned into the leash, and the hunt which had been arranged and looked forward to with such anticipations of delight was postponed to the first convenient day.

David was monarch of a country abounding in every variety of picturesque scenery, from the dark glen amid the rugged Grampians to the soft open and sunny vales which the Jed or the Dee waters. To him nature opened those sources of quiet but exquisite enjoyment which she locks up from the sensualist and the voluptuary. We infer his appreciation of the beautiful in landscape from his frequent and extensive peregrinations through his dominions. He looked at his kingdom with his own eyes. He investigated the condition of his subjects by contact and converse with them in their dwellings, at the plough, at their handicrafts, or among their flocks and herds. This exercised and extended his powers of observation, and gave him more real knowledge of his subjects in the course of a single journey than he would have acquired in a year from the reports of his officers and justiciars.

While the monarch thus gathered knowledge he at the



same time reaped enjoyment. We trace his movements in the numerous charters which he issued, and which show that while there was scarcely any part of his dominions which he did not visit, he was partial to certain spots, and these the most marked by their natural beauty. He paid occasional visits to the Forest Tower at Dunfermline, drawn thither doubtless by the touching memories of his mother rather than by any natural beauty of which the place can boast. Stirling was a favourite residence of the monarch. From the battlements of his castle he could look down on the rich corn lands of the Carse, through which, in silvery mazes, the Forth would be seen stealing quietly onwards to the ocean, while the incessant flickering of light and shade on the Ochils gave a magic beauty to the great bounding wall of the valley. There was one spot within range of David's eye to which he would have turned with even greater interest than was awakened in him by the rich prospect beneath him. But that spot had then no name, and was wholly undistinguished from the rest of the plain. Yet it was not to be so in years to come. One heroic battle was to kindle that spot, at a future day, into a glory that should fill the world and be a beacon-light to nerve the hero and inspire the patriot for all time—Bannockburn !

Again we find David at Perth, holding court on the banks of the Scottish Tiber, in the midst of scenery than which Italy has hardly anything richer or more romantic to show. Anon he moves eastward to Glammis or Forfar, where the greatest of Scottish straths is bounded by the grandest of Scottish mountain chains. Than this immense plain, nobler hunting field the monarch could nowhere find in Scotland. Where else could hawk spread his wings for a nobler flight, or hound be unleashed for a longer run, or steed career over more boundless amplitude of level plain



than in the space betwixt the Grampians and the Sidlaws. Moreover, it abounded in game of all kinds, and David often came to it to pursue the sport for which it was so well adapted, and in which he took so great a delight.

Moving southwards the king would exchange the Grampians for the pastoral Cheviots. We find him at Melrose, at Kelso, at Jedburgh, and other places on the Border. This region had a lyrical sweetness, and softness of scenery which, to one whose tastes were natural and pure, offered a charming contrast to the ruggedness of the northern portions of Scotland. The light of genius in after days was to glorify this region. Ballad and romance were to make it classic and storied. Meanwhile it possessed attractions which perhaps David prized more than these other unsubstantial glories which at a future age were to add their attractions to it. Its parks and forest glades were plentifully stocked with game, and if the sport was good, David did not much concern himself whether it was over common or over classic earth that he chased the roe and hunted the wild boar.

We find King David holding court on the Castle Rock. Edinburgh at that day had taken no high place among the cities of Scotland. Its site was strangely rugged and uneven, and gave no promise of ever becoming the seat of a great and magnificent capital such as it is at this day. Yet these seeming deformities, it would seem, were the very peculiarities that recommended this site to Art as a fitting stage for her marvels. Amid these rocky ridges and precipices she could display her power, as nowhere else, in overcoming the obstacles of nature, and her skill in converting difficulties into helps, and transforming deformity into beauty and grandeur. And the result has justified her choice. The hills on which, in David's days, there cowered a few tenements mostly of wood, flanked on either side by unsightly

and stagnant lochs, and shut in at the eastern extremity by an escarpment of crags, which, steep and lofty, frowned over a forest in which, whoever ventured to stray, had to lay his account with a possible encounter with the wild boar, a chance which tradition says once befell David himself, are now the seat of the Scottish metropolis. It is one of Art's grandest triumphs. Here she has given to the world a second Athens, only the second Athena excels the first in that it has a more romantic site, a grander Acropolis, and an Altar in the midst of it on which there is no longer the inscription, "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD."

Before entering on what was the principal work of David's life, and the work most frequently connected with his name, we shall despatch whatever may be worth narrating in his civil and military career. The passion for war was even stronger in the Norman than the passion for the chase. With David it was the latter passion that was the strongest. But though peace-loving in the main we find him at times on the battle-field. His relationship to the royal family of England drew him into these quarrels. To judge how far these armed interferences of his in the affairs of his neighbours, and which, in one instance at least, drew upon himself defeat and upon his army a terrible destruction, were justifiable or called for, we must pay some attention to his connection with the royal family of the southern kingdom, and the duty which, in David's opinion, that connection imposed upon him. Both David and his sister Matilda were educated in England. His sister became the wife of Henry I. Henry *Beauclerk* (the scholar), as Hume tells us he was called, from his knowledge of letters. There were born to Henry and Matilda, a son, who was named William, and a daughter who bore her mother's name, Matilda or Maud. Prince William died at the age of eighteen, leaving Maud,



the niece of David, heiress presumptive to the throne of England. Maud had been affianced (1110) by her father, though only eight years of age, to the Emperor of Germany, Henry V. On the death of Henry I. (1131) the empress Maud, now a widow, was left by her father's will the heir of all his dominions. Another claimant to the throne, however, came forward to contest the rights of the princess Maud. This was Stephen, also a kinsman of King David, by his younger daughter Mary, and a grandson of William the Conqueror by his daughter, the wife to Eustace, Earl of Boulogne. Stephen had long resided in England, and knowing the disinclination of the Norman nobility to the rule of a woman, he boldly seized the crown, and raising an army he marched northward with great celerity to meet David of Scotland, now in arms in support of the title of his niece, the Empress Maud. It was natural that he should espouse this side of the quarrel, and his conduct in doing so is all the more free from the imputation of interest or partiality, inasmuch as he was related to Stephen as well as to Maud. He is not to be so easily vindicated from the charges preferred against him on the ground of the barbarities committed by his army on its march into Yorkshire. These massacres and devastations were as impolitic as they were cruel. They enraged the powerful barons of the North of England, and alienated from him Robert de Brus, Walter l'Espece, and many others, who otherwise would have ranged themselves under his standard, and fought for the cause of his niece.

When the two combatants met at Durham neither felt himself prepared to commit the issue of the quarrel all at once to the decision of a battle. A treaty was patched up betwixt the English and the Scotch king, in which the chief article agreed on was that Prince Henry, the son of King David, should receive investiture of the earldom of Northum-



berland. Peace being concluded, Stephen returned to London, and thence passed to Normandy, but failing ultimately to implement the treaty as regarded the investiture of Prince Henry with Northumbria, the war soon again broke out.

We behold the two kings once more at the head of their armies (1138), and the north of England about to be watered with torrents of Scotch and English blood. On both sides the utmost diligence was shown in raising soldiers, and the utmost celerity in moving them to the spot where terrible battle should decide the quarrel. The Scotch king at the head of twenty-six thousand of his subjects penetrated into Northumbria. The English army marched as far as York to meet them. The chiefs in command of the Scotch, influenced by their hatred of the English, disregarded the humane wishes of David, and renewed the old depredations of Northumberland, to the disgust of the barons of Yorkshire, the former companions-in-arms of the Scottish monarch. The offended nobles went over to the standard of the enemy. The two armies met at Cutton Moor, near Northalerton. Ailred of Rivaux has given us the speeches delivered on both sides before battle was joined. They are wonderful specimens of rhetoric, taking into account the men from whom they came, and the moment at which they were spoken. If we may judge from these addresses, the Norman barons were as distinguished orators as they were redoubtable warriors. Their speeches make pleasant reading in the closet, but we may conclude that they were never spoken on the field.

Let us note the disposition of the two armies. The English force was the smaller in point of numbers, but the richer in those elements which command victory. Its movements were directed by Norman skill, and its soldiers were

inspired by Norman valour. The standard, which towered aloft in the middle of the host, added the powerful stimulus of fanaticism to the other incentives to valour and courage. It was so remarkable of its kind that it has given its name to the action fought under it, and which is known as "the Battle of the Standard." It was a tall pole like the mast of a ship, fixed in a moveable car, and bearing a-top a large cross, and in the centre of the cross a silver box which enclosed the consecrated wafer. Below the cross the banners of St Peter of York, of St John of Beverley, and St Wilfrid of Ripon, were seen to float. The standard sanctified the host and the cause for which it was in arms, and gave to every soldier assurance that should he fall in battle he would find the gates of Paradise open for his admission. The superiority of his armour furnished him with a more solid ground of confidence. This holy ensign was mainly the device of Thurstan, Archbishop of York, whom age and sickness alone prevented putting on his armour and appearing in the field.

Massed around the standard was a compact body of Norman knights, clad from head to foot in mail. The front rank of the army was composed of the infantry, or men-at-arms. They were flanked on either side by the terrible archers of England. Even should the Scots break through the ranks in the front and pass unscathed through the deadly shower of arrows that awaited them right and left, they had still to encounter the rock-like mass of Norman chivalry at the centre. They must break in pieces that all but impenetrable mass of valour and steel before they could possess themselves of the standard, and claim the victory.

Behind King David came a numerous but somewhat motley host, variously armed. Hardly was there shire betwixt the Solway and the Spey which had not sent its contingent to



this war. The clansmen of the Grampians were there, wielding the claymore, and covering their bodies with the small wicker-work shield which their ancestors had opposed to the Roman sword at the battle of Mons Grampius. There, too, were the men of the Scottish Midlands and the Lothians with spear and cuirass. From the Western Isles came a horde of fighters to confront the foe with their battle-axes. The bowmen of the border counties mustered on that field, as did also the Britons of Cumbria. And there, too, were the fierce Galwegians, brandishing their long pikes, and, like their Pictish ancestors of past ages, disdaining the use of defensive armour, and making valour to be to them for mail. Around the king rode a select company of Scottish and Norman knights, the latter the party of Maud, who wore their coats of mail, without, however, any impeachment of their bravery.

Before encountering the enemy, this host of diverse nationalities had a point of honour to settle among themselves. Who shall lead in the assault? The Galwegians clamoured loudly for the honour as their right. The rest of the army objected, for the obvious reason that it was risking too much to oppose unarmed men to the Norman steel. "Let the men-at-arms," said the counsellors of the king, "form the front line." The blood of the Galwegians boiled up higher than ever. "What the better," they scornfully asked, "were the Normans of their mail at Clitherow? Were they not fain to throw away their steel coats and flee before our pikemen?" The controversy was getting hotter every instant, and the king, to avoid a quarrel at a moment so critical, gave orders that the plan of battle should be as the Galwegians desired.

They rushed forward, shouting their war cry, "Alban, Alban!" The English front sustained the shock of the levelled pikes, and the moment of greatest danger to them had



passed. The terrible mistake of placing unarmed pikemen in the van of battle was now seen when it was too late. The long handle of the weapon they carried was shattered on the iron harness against which it struck, and the hapless owner was left with only a broken staff in his hand at the mercy of the English sword. The ranks behind pressed forward, but only to have their weapons shattered in their turn, and to stand unarmed like their comrades in the presence of the enemy. The confusion at the front, which was now great, seriously obstructed the advance of the Highlanders and the islesmen. But to stand idle spectators of the bloody fray was more than they were able to do. Unsheathing their claymores and brandishing their battle-axes they rushed forward over the bodies of the fallen pike-men. They made terrible havoc in the English ranks, but when they had hewed their way to the centre of the field their progress was arrested. The Norman knights stood firm. They kept their place around the standard sheathed in steel. They received the onset of the foe on the points of their lances, and the swords and battle-axes of their assailants became unserviceable. The English archers now saw that the moment had come for making their weapon, which already had become the terror of the battle-field, to be felt by the Scots. From both flanks they let fly a shower of yard-cloth shafts which did terrible execution. The position of the Scots was now intolerable. In front of them was a wall of levelled lances, through which they could not break. Above and around them was a cloud of arrows against which their claymores and battle-axes were powerless to defend them. Alas! that they should ever have been drawn to a field where their blood was to be poured out so freely in a quarrel which concerned them so little!

The fighting had lasted two hours. The numbers who

had fallen were about equal on both sides, yet there was no decided indication how the day would go. At this moment, however, a small artifice turned the tide of fortune against the Scots. An English soldier, severing the head from one of the many corpses on the field, held it aloft in token that the King of the Scots had been slain. The northern army was seized with dismay. King David hastily threw up his vizor to show his soldiers that he was still alive and in the midst of them. But the impression produced by the exhibition of the ghastly trophy could not be undone, and the king, judging it useless to prolong the effusion of blood, drew off his men from the field. He retired with rather more than half the army he had brought with him : the rest were to return no more.

The loss of the Battle of the Standard does not appear to have weakened David's power, or lowered his prestige as a great monarch. He retreated, but did not flee, and his retreat was conducted in a style that gave no encouragement to the English to pursue. In truth David was not more pleased to find himself in his own country than Stephen was to see him out of his. Negotiations were soon thereafter opened betwixt the two sovereigns. Had the Scotch and English monarchs made trial of a conference in the first instance, they might have been spared the necessity of assembling fifty thousand of their subjects in arms, and burying the one half of them on Cutton Moor. In these negotiations David gained, and Stephen conceded, all the objects, one only excepted, which had prompted the former to undertake his expedition into England. Cumberland was recognised, as by ancient right, as under the Scottish sceptre. Henry, the son of King David, a youth of rich promise, but fated to die early, received investiture of Northumberland, as far as the river Tees, and the earldom of Huntingdon. This last

princely inheritance came to Henry through his mother, the daughter of Earl Waltheop.

This treaty was concluded in A.D. 1139. Its provisions must have been satisfactory so far to the Scottish king, yet it did not include that on which doubtless he laid greatest stress. It contained no recognition of the right of his niece, the Empress Maud, to the throne of England. William the Norman had been placed on the throne of that kingdom by the battle of Hastings. To reverse the verdict of that field King David had assembled his army, and carried war into England. He thought to expel Stephen, and bring back the old Saxon line of princes. Happily he was unable to effect what he wished. With his niece on the English throne, Scotland might have been conquered without the interposition of arms, and the two countries quietly made one, to the grievous and lasting injury of both. Neither country had as yet developed its individuality, and the time was not ripe for the two to take their place by the side of each other as sister kingdoms, equally independent, and mutual workers in the cause of liberty. It is true, no doubt, that the war of independence, with its many bloody fields, would have been averted, had the two crowns now been united, but the higher interests of the world required that they should, for some centuries longer, remain separate. Scotland had to be prepared in isolation as a distinct theatre for patriotic and religious achievements of the highest order. And as regards England, her sceptre needed a stronger hand to hold it than the Saxon. The strong-minded, self-willed Norman was required to keep in check that ecclesiastical Power which was shooting up into an astuteness and arrogance which threatened alike prince and subject. The Saxon would have weakly succumbed to that power, and the vassalage of the English people would have been deeper than it ever



became in even the worst times of the Papacy. The Norman refused to have a master in his own dominions, and waged an intermittent war against the Papal assumptions all through till the times of the Reformation. To make way for this valorous race the Saxon princes were removed, and all the efforts of King David, whether on the battle-field or in the council chamber, to effect their restoration, came to nothing. The verdict of the field of Hastings could not be reversed, nor the Norman displaced from the throne to which the great Ruler had called him.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### KING DAVID'S ECCLESIASTICAL POLICY—ERECTION OF FIVE NEW BISHOPRICS — SUPPRESSION OF THE CULDEES.

THE genius of King David did not incline him to the battle-field, yet there were times when he deemed it right to put on armour and appear at the head of armies. On these occasions he bore himself with a chivalry and a valour which showed that had he given himself to the study of war he would have shone in arms. As it was he was accounted the first knight of the age. His more congenial sphere was the cabinet, and glad he was when he could dismiss his soldiers to their homes, put off his coat of mail, and retire into his closet, or take his seat at his palace gate, and hear the complaints, and redress the grievances of his subjects. When the last suitor had departed, David would vault into the saddle, gallop off to moorland or forest glade, and forget the cares of state in the excitements of the hunting field.

David's reign would have been one of the happiest and most peaceful in our early annals but for two fondly cherished projects. The one was to restore the Saxon line to the throne of England. This would have made the balance of power in the coming centuries incline to the side of the Papal domination. The Saxon line would have been as clay in the astute hands of the Papal managers. There was more iron in the Norman princes, and the battle betwixt English liberty

and priestly domination was in consequence a more equal one. It was a mighty blessing to England that David failed in all his attempts to reverse the verdict of the field of Hastings, by bringing back the exiled family to the throne. The other project on which David's heart was set was to change the religion of Scotland, and substitute the priests of a foreign faith for the native clergy. In this he but too well succeeded.

Many things may be pleaded in excuse of David in adopting a policy the issues of which were so disastrous to his country. He was the son of Queen Margaret. He had been the witness of her austere devotions. With her throne there had been transmitted to him, he doubtless believed, the sacred obligation of taking up and prosecuting her work. That work had been hers, and was therefore holy. He had been educated in England, and had lived there to the mature age of forty. With Columba and his Church he could have no sympathy. He had heard the Columbites spoken of as dwellers beyond the bounds of the civilized earth, as intractable men who obstinately clung to barbarous rites, and had no reverence for the mighty name of Rome. Though the religion of the age was weak, its ecclesiasticism was powerful, and was every year becoming more so, and David was not the only monarch who was borne along with the current, believing that in adding to the grandeur of Rome he was adding to the power of Christianity. This helps us to understand, though it does not enable us to justify, a policy which, a few generations after, cost the family of Margaret the throne of Scotland, while the church which she hoped to extinguish lived on, and came forth in the dawn of a new era refined and transformed to inhabit her old land.

When David came to the throne he found four Romish sees in existence in Scotland. During Margaret's lifetime Fotadh reigned alone as the "one bishop of Alban." But



Rome knew him not. Fotadh drew his ecclesiastical lineage, not from the Seven Hills, but from Iona. He was the last representative of that famous line which had so long swayed the spiritual sceptre over Scotland, but which Rome held to be a rival and rebellious house. Had Margaret lived, Scotland would not have long remained in the care of but one Shepherd, and he not validly consecrated. Other shepherds would have been found with the oil of the pope upon them. But Margaret's death put a stop to the work. The succession of her sons to the throne was contested. Then followed wars and confusions in the country. There were years when there was neither Columbite nor Romish bishop in the land. There was nothing but an empty chair at St Andrews, a monument, alas, of the spiritual desolation of Scotland! When Alexander I. ascended the throne the work which had been stopped by the death of his mother was vigorously resumed, and considerable progress was made in it. Before Alexander's death four centres of Romish action had been established in Scotland.

Let us look at these four ecclesiastical sees, with the territories or dioceses assigned for their spiritual oversight and jurisdiction. St Andrews comes first in honour as in time. If a history springing out of legend and mystery can make a place sacred, the spot where the first Romish see was set up in Scotland is truly venerable. When the pontiff first came to Rome he was content to borrow the fisherman's chair. When he first came to Scotland he over again had to be content with a borrowed chair. He set himself down in what had been the seat of Columba. It had stood vacant for some time, but after many vexatious delays an occupant was now found for it, and a diocese assigned it which stretched across the Forth, and comprehended the Lothians.

The second see was that of Moray. The extensive plains,

watered by the Findhorn and the Spey, formed its diocese. Truly the lines had fallen in pleasant places to this bishop, seeing the territory placed under his spiritual sceptre may challenge comparison with any in Scotland in point of a fruitful soil and a salubrious and kindly climate. The bishop was content to have as his cathedral one of the humble parish churches of the district, probably a building of wood or wattles like most of the Columbite churches of the period. Eventually he and his canons removed to Elgin, where a sumptuous pile, worthy the church whose representative he was and whose jurisdiction he exercised, rose to receive him.

The third ecclesiastical see was established at Dunkeld. Here the air was filled with the memories of Columba. The traditions of his church clung to the very rocks which bound the little valley through which, broad and clear, rolls the Tay. Rome in this invasion is seen to tread in the foot-prints of the great Apostle of Iona. She steals in under the mighty prestige of his name while anathematising his followers, and treading out the foundations of his church. From this little central valley the bishop's spiritual kingdom extended far and wide around. On the west it included the rich straths and the grand mountains of the modern Perthshire, onward to the historic boundary of Drumalban. On the south Strathearn and on the east Angus were subject to his sceptre. A numerous flock verily! Truly he had need to be a wise and vigilant shepherd, if he were to give in his account "with joy," when a greater master than the Pope should come to call him to a reckoning. Nor were even these the limits of his diocese. On the south it stretched to the banks of the Forth, comprehending Inchcolm with its little colony of Augustinian monks, and Loch Leven with its Columban brotherhood, soon to have



the alternative presented to them of submission to the Roman rule or ejection from their monastery.

A fourth see was added to these three earlier ones, that of Glasgow even. The erection of this bishopric was the work of David before he had come to the throne, and while governing the southern provinces of Scotland as prince of Cumbria. David caused inquisition to be made by "the elders and wise men of Cumbria" into the lands and buildings which in former ages had belonged to the Christian Church in those parts. An account was compiled and laid before him of all the old ecclesiastical property which the many revolutions in that part of Scotland had diverted from its original uses to secular ends, sweeping away therewith almost all traces of Christianity itself. Acting on that document, David in 1121 constituted the bishopric of Glasgow, and appointed his tutor John to the see. The property was not rightfully either David's or John's. It had belonged to an earlier church. The Culdees were the true heirs, but they were powerless against Prince David, whose pleasure it was that their ancient inheritance should pass to a church which their fathers had not known.

The diocese of Glasgow extended from the banks of the Clyde to the shores of the Solway on the south, and from the Lothians to the river Urr on the west. In this instance, too, we find the Romanizers building on the old foundations. The readers of this history know how famous this whole region was in the evangelical records of Scotland. Its atmosphere was redolent of the memories of patriarchal men. Here, while it was yet night, Ninian had kindled the lamp of the faith, and the dwellers by the Solway and in the vales of Teviotdale and by the waters of the Nith saw a great light rise upon them. In after days when war, with its attendant lawlessness and wickedness, had all but obliterated the footprints of the



apostle of Galloway, Kentigern, the friend and contemporary of Columba, came forth to sow over again, with the good seed, the fields from which the early cultivation of Ninian had well-nigh been entirely swept away. Ninian and Kentigern carried no commission from Rome, and did not teach in the name of the Pope. In those days that name carried no weight with it in these northern parts. But since that time this ecclesiastical functionary had shot up into a great personage. He claimed to carry the key of the gospel kingdom, and in the exercise of that power he had given admission to the Gothic tribes which had now for centuries been folded beneath his crook, and tended by him as their shepherd. Learning that there were still a few wanderers in these remote parts, he sent thither his messengers to say to these lost sheep that yet there was room. These four bishoprics were the beginning of Rome's kingdom in Scotland.

When David came to the throne the work of uprooting the ancient Scottish Church and rearing the new ecclesiastical fabric went forward with increased diligence and speed. The zeal of Alexander was coldness itself compared with the enthusiastic ardour of David. The former during his lifetime had added two new sees; when the latter died he left nine bishoprics in Scotland. The first of these was the see of Ross or Rossemarkie. It was founded about 1128, for the name of "Macbeth, Bishop of Rossemarken," is appended, along with that of others, to a charter granted to the monks of Dunfermline in that year.<sup>1</sup> Rossemarkie was originally a Columban foundation, established by Molouc, Abbot of Lismore. In the eighth century it was still an establishment of the Culdees. In the ninth it had been brought more into line with Rome, and now under David its transformation was completed by its erection into a

<sup>1</sup> *Register of Dunfermline*, p. 3.

Romish bishopric. The cathedral, now a ruin, was built in the fourteenth century.

The next see to be established was that of Aberdeen. The diocese was bounded by the Dee on one side and the Spey on the other. Its first historic appearance is in a bull of Pope Adrian IV. in 1157. The bull confirms to Edward, Bishop of Aberdeen, the churches of Aberdeen and St Machar, with the town of Old Aberdeen, the monastery of Cloveth, the monastery and town of Mortlach, with five churches and the lands belonging to them.<sup>1</sup> Fordun records the tradition of an earlier see which Malcolm II. was said to have established at Mortlach in gratitude for the great victory he here gained over the Norwegians. This, however, is inconsistent with the undoubted fact that in that age there was but one bishop in Scotland. If Malcolm founded anything on the scene of that eventful battle it was a house or monastery of Culdees. The documents which were thought to authenticate Fordun's tradition have since been shown to be spurious. The cathedral came two hundred years after the institution of the see, being begun 1272 and finished 1377.

The diocese of Aberdeen included within its boundaries the two famous monasteries of Deer and Turriff. The first, as our readers know, was founded by Columba, and committed to the care of his nephew Drostan. The second arose in the century following, having for its founder Comgan, a disciple of Columba. Of the archaic discoveries of our day not the least important is the "Book of Deer." This venerable relict of the Columban Church shows these two monasteries—and if these two, why not others?—resting on their original constitution and retaining their Culdean character down to the reign of David I. Besides its more sacred

<sup>1</sup> *Regist. Episc. Aberdon.*, p. 5.



contents the Book of Deer contains a memoranda of grants to the monastery, "written in the Irish character and language."<sup>1</sup> These grants are engrossed on the margin of the first two pages of the book, and on the three blank pages at the end of the MS. There are two grants by Gartnait, Mormaer or Earl of Buchan, who lived in the earlier years of King David. We can trace in these grants the change which was passing upon the age as to ecclesiastical affairs. One of the grants is made to Columcile and Drostan alone. It is evident from this that the founders of the Celtic Church have not yet come to be overshadowed and displaced by the mightier saints of the Roman Church. But the prestige that once invested the names of Columba and Drostan is waning, and accordingly the other grant by Gartnait is dedicated to St Peter, and is accompanied by a refounding of the church. When we read of this and other dedications it relieves us to reflect that the Peter who figures in them is not the fisherman of Galilee, but the Jupiter Tonans of the Vatican. He, and not the apostle, is the Atlas on whose shoulders Rome imposes her mighty burden. The scribe who wrote these grants has warned off every profane or greedy hand that would snatch these gifts either in whole or in part from their proper use. His words are very emphatic. "They are made," he says, "in freedom from Mormaer and Toisech, till the day of judgment, with his blessing on every one who shall fulfil, and his curse on every one who shall go against it."<sup>2</sup>

The fourth bishopric established by David was that of Caithness. As regards extent of diocese this was the greatest of the four. It was assigned the wide territory

<sup>1</sup> Skene's *Celtic Scotland*, ii. 381.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. 381.

The Book of Deer was edited by Dr John Stuart for the Spalding Club. The original is in the library of Cambridge University. It is believed to have been written in the ninth century.



betwixt the Moray and the Pentland firths, comprehending the counties of Caithness and Sutherland. This see, so imposing in point of area, was nevertheless somewhat unreal. It does not appear that the holder of it could meanwhile reside within the bounds of his diocese, or gather the revenues of his see, or exercise the spiritual oversight of his flock. The political situation of the region was anomalous. It was subject to the Earl of Orkney, who, although he held nominally of the Scottish crown, oftener rendered real obedience to the Norwegian King. Meanwhile David provided for the suitable maintenance of the bishop by conferring upon him the Church of the Holy Trinity at Dunkeld, which was dowered with numerous estates in Perthshire. The principal church of the diocese was that of Dornoch, on the northern shore of the Cromarty firth. This was a Columban foundation, and one of no little distinction as well from its high antiquity as from the eminence of its founder. The district owed its first evangelisation to St Finnan of Magh-bile, the preceptor and friend of Columba, and it does not surprise us that down till the days of King David there existed here a community of Culdees. Their numbers we do not know, but after the institution of the new see they appear to have rapidly declined; and in a century after, the brotherhood was reduced to a single cleric who ministered in the church of Dornoch. And now he too disappears, and in his room comes a chapter of canons, ten in number, with dean, chancellor, precentor, treasurer, and all the other officials of a regularly equipped cathedral staff. By this time (1235-1245) the humble church of Dornoch had been replaced by a cathedral, built by Gilbert de Moravia, now Bishop of Moray. In the deed establishing the chapter the bishop sets forth, "that in the times of his predecessors there was but a single priest ministering in the cathedral, both on

account of the poverty of the place and by reason of frequent hostilities, and that he desired to extend the worship of God in that church, and resolved to build a cathedral church at his own expense, to dedicate it to the Virgin Mary, and in proportion to his limited means to make it conventual." <sup>1</sup>

So close the annals of the Columban Church in the region beyond the Moray Firth. For six centuries that church had kept her lamp burning on that northern shore. At no time does she appear to have been very prosperous or flourishing. She suffered all but total extinction during the storms of the Viking age. She flourished a second time under the more settled rule of the Norwegian monarchs. But again decay set in. The Columban brotherhood diminished in numbers as in zeal, till only one solitary watcher is seen going his round on the ramparts of this distant outpost of the evangelical kingdom. At last he too disappears, and his vacant place is filled by a dean and chapter of canons-regular, whose ministrations are performed in a cathedral which the munificence of Gilbert de Moravia, Bishop of Moray, has reared for their use.

The Culdees of Dornoch passed gradually and peacefully out of existence. Not so some of the brotherhoods in the south. They had a more violent ending. Let us speak first of the demolition of the Monastery of Lochleven. Lochleven is the tamest of all the Scottish lakes. Its level shores offer themselves invitingly to the husbandman whose labours they repay with a bounteous harvest, but they present no attractions to the tourist in search of the picturesque or the grand in scenery. But although without adornment of rock or tree, Lochleven, in point of historic interest, has no equal among the lakes of Scotland. Its name in Gaelic is "Loch

<sup>1</sup> From the original charter in the archives of Dunrobin Castle, quoted in Belsham's *History of the Catholic Church of Scotland*, i. 293.



Leamnah," that is, the "Lake of the Elm." Its interest centres in a small island which rises not far from the northern shore, and which has been the scene of events older than the union of the Picts and Scots. Like the great outside world this little island has seen many changes in its population. Diverse have been the professions and the fortunes of those who have made it their abode. The recluse has sought its quiet that he might here meditate and pray, while others after playing their part in the busy world have welcomed it as a refuge from the storms of State. Different faiths have reared their sanctuaries upon it. Now it is the old Hebrew psalms, sung by Columbite anchorite, that float out their majestic melody from the isle of St Serf: now it is the chant of mass or vespers, hymned by mediæval monk, that is heard stealing softly over the calm face of the waters, and now in days more recent it is the sighs of an imprisoned Queen that break upon the stillness. On this little isle lived Andrew Wyntoun, who occupied the years of his laborious solitude in the composition of his famous history of Scotland from the creation to the captivity of James I.<sup>1</sup> Brude, the last King of the Picts, founded here (842) a colony of Columbites, and David I., in the twelfth century, found them living on their ancient island.<sup>2</sup> They form one of the most notable links betwixt the early church of Columba and the later church of the Culdees. "They were," says Dr Skene, "the oldest *Keledean* establishment in Scotland, and thus exhibited its earliest form."<sup>3</sup> Retaining their ecclesiastical and spiritual characteristics to the very last, they present an un-

<sup>1</sup> Wyntoun wrote his history in verse. The original is in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh. He was a native of Portmoak, which belonged to the Monastery of Lockleven. This village was also the birth-place of John Douglas, the first taldhan Archbishop of St Andrews.

<sup>2</sup> For numerous interesting notices of the Culdee houses and their suppression see *Chalmers' Caledonia*, vol. i. pp. 454-443. London, 1807.

<sup>3</sup> Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, ii. 388.



broken continuity of lineage from before the days of Kenneth MacAlpin to those of David I. ; a fact which effectually dispels the illusion that the Columbans of the eighth century and the Culdees of the twelfth are two different sects of religionists, and constitute two different churches. No ! the two have manifestly sprung from the loins of the same great progenitor. Both are the children of Columba.

The monastery of Lochleven was dedicated to Servanus, or St Serf, one of the early evangelists of Scotland, who, when the monastery was founded, had been some centuries in his grave. His legend, which we have given in a former chapter, is one of the main props of the theory that the Culdees were in some sort Roman monks. According to the legend, Servanus was born in Canaan, where his father was a king. He travelled to the west, and for seven years filled the Apostolic chair at Rome. Vacating the See of Peter, Servanus wandered as far northward as Scotland. There he met Adamnan, who led him to Lochleven, and installed him as Abbot on the island which he and his followers were afterwards to make so famous. Under this *ci-devant* pontiff there grew up a family of monks, of course, according to the legend, of the Roman genus. King David found them still nestling in their island, and stupidly mistaking them for the children of Iona, and the professors of an evangelical creed, he compelled them to enter the communion of the Church of Rome, and those who stubbornly refused he drove from their monastery. Not by a single word would we weaken the force of this most ingenious explanation of the Romish origin and alleged Roman proclivities of the Scottish Culdees.

Few in number, broken in spirit by oppression, and despoiled of nearly all the lands with which the kings and normans of other days had, perhaps too amply, endowed them, some of the Culdees yet dared to offer resistance to

David's peremptory mandate that they should cease being Culdean eremites and at once become Roman canons. All that they had ever possessed now passed to the foreign ecclesiastics who came in their room, down to the last rag of their ecclesiastical vestments and the last volume of their little library. In the royal charter now given to the Bishop of St Andrews David declares that "he had given and granted to the Canons of St Andrews the island of Lochleven, that they might establish canonical order there; and the *Keledei* who shall be found there, if they consent to live as regulars, shall be permitted to remain in society with and subject to the others; but should any of them be disposed to offer resistance, his will and pleasure was that such should be expelled from the island."<sup>1</sup> A century later (1248) the monastery of Lochleven is found to be occupied solely by canons-regular of the Augustinian order, and the *Keledei* are extinct.

This glimpse of the last days of the Culdees of Lochleven shows us how speckled was the religious aspect of Scotland during the twelfth century. Two faiths were contending for possession of the land: neither as yet had got the mastery and held exclusive occupancy. The age was a sort of borderland betwixt Culdeecism and Romanism. The two met and mingled often in the same monastery, and the religious belief of the nation was a jumble of superstitious doctrines and a few scriptural truths. The monastery of Lochleven is an illustrative example. The Culdee establishment there had, prior to 961, become connected with the Abbey of St Andrews through the bishop of that place, himself a Culdee. This Culdee bishop would seem to have exercised a superinten-

<sup>1</sup> *De Episcopis, British Culdees*, p. 42. The name was first latinised into *Kelidones* in Irish documents, where it is first met with, subsequently into *Culidones*; whence in English, *Culdees*.

dence, not only over the Culdees of Lochleven, but over all the Culdee communities in the district of St Andrews, forming thus a foreshadowing of the diocesan jurisdiction under the Papacy in days to come.<sup>1</sup>

As it fared with the Culdees of Lochleven, so it fared with the Culdees of Monimusk. This monastery was of earlier institution doubtless than the days of its reputed founder, Malcolm Canmore. The Big Head was on his way northward to chastise the men of Moray (1078) who had fallen under his displeasure. Halting at his barony of Monimusk, in the valley of the Don, he vowed that if his expedition were successful he would devote his barony to St Andrew. Returning victorious he kept his word to the letter and beyond it. Many a fair acre on the pleasant banks of the Don became the property of the saint. Others, who wished to earn a name for piety, followed the example of the king, and pasturage and moor, woodland and mountain, swelled the possessions of the monastery. "There is a time to gather," says the wise man. To the monks of Monimusk it was now the "time to gather," but already the cloud of coming tempest was in the sky. Their monastery was on the north of the Grampians, but their spiritual fealty was due on the south of these mountains. The Bishop of St Andrews claimed them as under his episcopal care, and this gave him a pretext for drawing their possessions into his net. William, Bishop of

<sup>1</sup> See *Monasticon*, i. 94.

The ruins of the conventual buildings are still to be seen on the island. The island is about half a mile from east to west, but of late has been enlarged by the drainage of the lake. The ruins of the chapel of St Serf lie toward the east end of the island, where the ground rises some forty feet above the level of the lake. The ruins are simply the under storey of the building, and are now used as a shed or stable. On the east of them are the foundations of buildings. In front of the south wall human bones have been found in great quantities, some of them at the depth of six feet, showing that the spot had been used as a burying ground.



St Andrews, picked a quarrel with them and carried it (1211) to Rome. The Papal chair was then filled by one of the most astute popes that ever sat in it, Innocent III. The man who had launched the crusades against the Waldenses was not likely to look with a favourable eye upon the Keledei of Monimusk. Judgment finally was given against them. The bulk of their property was transferred to the See of St Andrews, and any one who should dare to disturb this arrangement was threatened with "the indignation of the Omnipotent God, and the Apostles Peter and Paul." In 1245 the Culdees of Monimusk finally disappear, and the Augustinian canons come in their room.<sup>1</sup>

We pass over the Culdee establishments of Abernethy and Dunblane. It is the same story of gradual suppression, attended with more or less violence, and ending in utter spoliation and entire extinction. After the same fashion were all the Culdee communities throughout Scotland dealt with. We turn to St Andrews, the most important of all the Columban seats.

The Culdee community of St Andrews was a flourishing body down till the middle of the twelfth century. The Bishop of St Andrews, at least so long as he was the one Bishop of Scotland, was held to be the representative of Columba, and to sit in his chair, which had been transferred from Iona to St Andrews. In fact, with a change of title from "abbot" to "bishop," this functionary presided over the one Church of Scotland, which, down to the days of King David, continued to be Columban in doctrine and ritual. We should therefore expect to find the Culdees grouped in greater numbers and stronger vitality around the chair of the Bishop of St Andrews than elsewhere in Scotland. They had elected him. He was their immediate head. They

<sup>1</sup> *Monasticism*, i. 104.

beheld in him the image of the great founder of their church, and while he sat there by their suffrages, that once mighty church which had sent her missionaries into all lands from the Po to the Elbe, and established a chain of evangelical posts from the Apennines to the shores of Iceland, was not yet extinct, nor the glories of Iona altogether departed. At St Andrews, if anywhere, we should expect a stout fight for the old cause. Nor are we disappointed. Two hundred long years the Culdees of the old city "on the brink of the waves" maintained their battle for church and country against this foreign invasion.

Till the year 1144 the Culdees were in sole possession at St Andrews. Roman monk had not been seen within its walls. But in that year Prior Robert of Scone, whom we have already met with, crossed the Tay with a little colony of Augustinian canons, whom he established at St Andrews. He provided a maintenance for them out of the lands of the Culdees, he gave them moreover two of the seven portions of the altar offerings, and various other perquisites besides. A bull of Pope Lucius II. of the same year confirmed the new foundation. The disinherited Culdees were told that they might *recoup* themselves in part by enrolling their names in the new fraternity to which their lands had been conveyed. In the charter which King David now granted to the prior and canons of St Andrews was the following provision: "That they" (the prior and canons) "shall receive the *Keledei* of Kilrimont into the canonry, with all their possessions, if they are willing to become canons-regular; but, if they refuse, those who are now alive are to retain their property during their lives; and, after their death, as many canons-regular are to be instituted in the church of St Andrews as there are now *Keledei*, and all their possessions are to be appropriated to

the use of the canons."<sup>1</sup> David doubtless thought that he acted generously in opening this door to the Culdees. Will they enter it? Their recantation is made a very simple affair; it is but to don the frock of the Augustinian and then sit down at the same refectory-board, and share in the good things which fall to the lot of those who worship as kings are pleased to enjoin.

Stript of half their property, the King and the Pope in league for their destruction, one half the Columban brotherhoods already suppressed, and sentence of doom hanging over themselves, we expect to hear the Culdees say, "It is vain longer to resist. The battle is lost before it is begun." So would worldly policy have counselled. But the Culdees took counsel neither of worldly wisdom nor of self-interest. They preferred a good conscience to wealthy emoluments. And now we have to speak of one of the grandest combats of religion against power, and of a little party against tremendous odds, which is to be met with in the annals of our country. Prelatist and Romanist historians have found only a few commonplace sentences to bestow on this conflict. They see neither patriotism nor chivalry in it because the combatants were Culdees. But let us gauge the affair at its true magnitude. The war which we now see commencing betwixt these two parties so vastly dissimilar in numbers and in worldly resources was maintained, not for a few years, not for a generation, but for two centuries. Father handed it down to son. This shows the sort of men the Church of Columba could produce. "Your worship is barbarous," said Bishop Turgot to the Culdees of his day. Yet from these humble Culdee sanctuaries came forth men of colossal

<sup>1</sup> *Register Prior. St Andr.*, pp. 122-123; Reeves, *British Culdees*; Skene's *Celtic Scotland*, ii. 385.



stature, spiritual heroes. At the ecclesiastical capital of Scotland, with superb cathedrals rising on every side, and churchmen blossoming into baronial rank and princely revenues, we see the Culdees maintaining, for two hundred years on end, a living protest that there was an earlier church in Scotland than the Roman, and by their steadfast loyalty giving most emphatic expression to the depth of their conviction that that church was founded on the truth of Scripture, and was the church of prophets and apostles, and displaying their undying faith, that despite the violence by which she had been overborne, she would yet rise from her ruins and flourish in the land.

Of the history of this long war we have only snatches. It is, in fact, an unwritten epic. The bull of pope flashes light at times upon it, for the Culdees are of sufficient importance to be mentioned in the Vatican, and to be the object at times of its thunders. Occasionally this long conflict comes to view in the "Register of the Priory of St Andrews." In that document we read of their disputes with the canons-regular; of their claim to take part in the election of the Bishop of St Andrews, sometimes granted, sometimes denied; and of their appeals to Rome, where they are only half welcome, and hardly ever once successful. These fragmentary notices give us no just idea of the conflict, beyond its general set. We see the "House of Columba" growing weaker and weaker, and the "House of the pontiff" growing stronger and stronger, and we easily forecast the issue.

In 1144 the scheme for the extinction of the St Andrews Culdees was commenced, as we have said, in the establishment of Augustinian canons. In 1147 they were deprived by a Papal bull of their right to elect the Bishop of St Andrews. This was appealed against, and for more than a

century the right of the Culdees to take part in the episcopal election was confirmed and disallowed by various popes.<sup>1</sup> In 1162 their share in the seven portions of the altar-offerings was forbidden them. In 1220 we find them refusing to surrender the prebend of a deceased *Keledeus* to a canon-regular, but at the interference of Pope Innocent IV. they were obliged to submit, making over at the same time the possession attached to the post to its new occupant. In 1258 they are deprived of their status as vicars of the Parish Church of St Andrews. In 1273 they were finally excluded from their right of participating in the election of the bishop. In 1309 the Barony of the *Keledei* is classed as one of the three baronies within the bounds of what was termed the "Boar's Chase."<sup>2</sup> In 1332 their name occurs for the last time in the formula of exclusion ever renewed when a new bishop was to be elected. All these years the Culdees assembled in their "nook" and ate their eucharistic supper "after their own fashion." Henceforward the continued existence of the Culdee community is notified by the new designation of "Provost and Prebendaries of the Church of St Mary," sometimes styled St Mary of the Rock.<sup>3</sup> They now pass out of view, but not out of existence. Their battle of two hundred years, save twelve (1144-1332), was over, but their testimony was still prolonged. Under the name of the "Provost and Prebendaries of St Mary of the Rock," they kept their place before the world till the Reformation, as the survivors and representatives of the once powerful apostolic church of early Scotland.

<sup>1</sup> *Regist. S. Andr.*, pp. 29, 30.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Appendix to Preface, p. xxxi.

<sup>3</sup> The reputed foundations of the ruined cell or chapel of the Culdees at St Andrews are on a rock to the east of the Cathedral, on the very brink of the waves, and are still to be seen.

## CHAPTER XX.

A.D. 1128.

### FOUNDING AND ENDOWING OF THE ABBEY OF HOLYROOD.

HAVING cleared the way by the removal of the old institutions, which, in David's opinion, were but cumberers of the ground, the King addressed himself to the second part of his task, which was to rear suitable fabrics for the new worship, and to bring ecclesiastics from abroad to conduct the services in them. This leads us to speak of the abbeys, priories, and other religious houses which now sprang up in all parts of the country—the lights which Rome kindled to illuminate our land after she had put out the candle of Iona.

First comes the founding of the Abbey of Holyrood. Not that Holyrood was the earliest, or even the most important, of these establishments. St Andrews came before it both in point of time and in point of rank, being the seat of the primacy, and renowned moreover for the power of its abbot, the wealth of its revenues, and the number and sumptuousness of its ecclesiastical buildings, although not till 1472 did it exercise metropolitan jurisdiction. Its bishop was repeatedly balked in his applications to Rome for the pallium, the Pope suspecting, perhaps, that he had a strain of Columban blood in his veins.

The Abbey of Holyrood was founded by King David in 1128. The incident that led to its founding has been



worked up into a pretty romance by the old chroniclers, and it is difficult to say how much of the story is truth and how much is fable. We may safely say that fable predominates. It was rood-day,—the anniversary of the exaltation of the Cross,—and David, as became the devout son of an eminently devout mother, had passed the morning with his Court in the religious exercises proper to the day. These performances duly discharged, some of the young nobles of his Court came round him, begging to be permitted to unbend from the austerities of the morning, in the freedom of the woods and the excitements of the chase. Fond as David was of the sport he must first take counsel with his confessor, Alwin.<sup>1</sup> His spiritual adviser forbade the pastime as a profanation of holy Rood-day, and dangerous to the souls of those who pursued their recreations to the neglect of the due observance of the sacred season. The young gallants however pressed their suit, and the King, yielding to their importunity, mounted his horse, and sounding his bugle, rode away at the head of his retinue, and plunged into the thickets and hunting grounds which adjoined the Castle of Edinburgh, where he and his Court were then residing.

How different the landscape which presented itself as viewed from the Castle Rock in the days of David from the palatial magnificence of temple and statue, of garden and fountain that now lies spread out around these venerable battlements. The old rock was there, but it rose in unadorned grandeur. That rock has probably been the site of some sort of fortress ever since the time that our island was first inhabited. It stands in the great strath that runs from the western to the eastern side of Scotland, and which long

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards first Abbot of Holyrood. He wrote a book of Homilies and Epistles. *Monasticon*, i. 151.

ages ago was probably filled by the sea. The gulf stream that now strikes upon the shore of Ayr and the mountains of Argyll, in those days rolled through it. The force of the rushing waters would wear down and wash away the softer materials that formed the bed of this great ocean river, carrying them into the German Sea, and leaving the harder rocks of trap to form the bold and prominent eminences which so attract and delight the eye at this day. It is to these causes, which operated when there was neither eye to mark nor pen to record them, that the capital of Scotland owes its craggy environment, and more especially its great central rock, which towers up in the heart of the city, like a monarch, with its tiara of bastions and battlements.

Savage tribes continually at war with one another would look out for the most impregnable point on which to erect their dwelling. Few better places could have been found for safe encampment than this rock. Probably the first stronghold erected on it would consist of a few turf mounds, surrounded by a pallisade of wood, such as the savages of New Zealand were wont to erect in times not long gone by; next would come a vitrified fort, which was the second form of stronghold in Scotland; and last of all there would rise a stone building, inclosed by a rampart and wall, much as we see it in our own day. Such had the Castle Rock become in the days of King David.

Let us recall the landscape which offered itself to the eye of the monarch as he surveyed it from the fortress where he was now holding his court. It is the year 1128. At the foot of the rock, clinging close to it for protection, is a small hamlet. That is the Edinburgh of those days. Outside the hamlet, divided from it by a green field, is a church in the valley, the Kirk of St Cuthbert, originally one of the Culdee establishments. On the east is a trail of soil, the deposit of



the great ocean stream of former ages, forming the long sloping bank on which the High Street and Canongate now stand. The country all about is as wild, rough, and untamed as we can well imagine landscape to be. It is mostly covered with wood. Here stand dense forests of tall trees, there a thin growth of brushwood covers the ground. Lochs gleam out here and there, while the water-fowl that make them their haunt are guarded from intrusion by the nature of the ground around them, which is swampy and boggy. In the far west are seen the peaks of the Grampian chain, behind which, night by night, the summer's sun is seen to drop into the Western Ocean, hard by the spot where was the cradle of the Scots, and the illustrious island which connects its glory with the history of their race. On the east, at a mile's distance, rises a fine crescent of naked cliffs, and towering over them is the lion-shaped mass of Arthur's Seat. Farther off, in the same line of view, is the Firth, with its islands and its two Laws, Largo on the north, and North Berwick on the south, on the cone-shaped summits of which, long before the days of David, the Druids were wont to kindle the fires of Baal.

It was rood-day, as we have said. The morning had been duly honoured with religious acts, and the hunting-field claimed the remaining hours of the day. It was the fourth year of the reign of David, says the chronicler, and he had come to visit the maiden castle. "About this castle," continues he, "was ane great forrest full of hairts, hynds, toddis (foxes), and sick like manner of beasts, for the country was more to store of bestial than any production of corns." The narrator hints that such was the condition of the whole country, namely, wood and meadow, and rarely cornfield. "At last," says he, "when the King was come through the vale that lies to the east of the said castle, where now



lies the Canongate, the staill passed through the wood with sick noise and din of rachis and bugillis, that all the beasts were raised frae their dens." The King was now near the foot of the crags, and by some hap separated from his company and alone in the wood, "when suddenly," says the chronicler, "appeared to his sycht the fairest hart that ever was seen afore by leavand creatour." At the sight of his branching antlers the King's horse took fright and fled. The hart pursued, and overtaking the horse, threw both horse and rider on the ground. The King throwing out his hands behind him to save himself from the horns of the stag, there was slipt into them a cross, at the sight of which the hart fled as fast from the King as it had before pursued him. King David was afterwards admonished in a vision to build an abbey on the spot where he had experienced this miraculous deliverance. Such is the legend of the founding of Holyrood Abbey.<sup>1</sup>

We may grant that the King had an encounter with a stag when hunting, without believing, what the legend plainly insinuates, that the apparition that assailed the King with intent to kill him, was an evil angel in the shape of a hart, and that his escape from the demon was owing to the miraculous intervention of a cross which had slipped down from the skies, or had been thrust into the King's hand by an invisible guardian whose duty it was to attend the good monarch. This we may do with all deference to the fact, that the mysterious cross was shown in the Castle long after, till it was carried to England by Edward I., and though brought

<sup>1</sup> Told by Bellenden, the translator of Boëce, who heads his story—"How King David passed to the huntis on the Croce day in heruest. How he was doung frae his horse by ane wyld hart. And how he foundit the abbay of Halyrudhouse by myracle of the holy Croce." See *Monasticon*, i, 138.

back to Scotland, has again disappeared, and is irrecoverably lost.<sup>1</sup>

The pious purpose having been taken to build an abbey on the spot where he had experienced what has been called his miraculous deliverance, King David, in 1128, set about active preparations for the erection. Scotch masons do not appear to have been employed on the building. "The King incontinent," says Bellenden, "sent his trustiest servands into France and Flanderis, and brocht rycht crafty masonis to big this abbay." Ecclesiastical architecture was the main study of the twelfth century. It was specially cultivated by the German masons, who formed a numerous and honourable corporation, whose members travelled through Europe, and built for kings and nobles those wonderful cathedral-churches which still remain, some entire, others in ruins, to testify to the irrepressible ecclesiasticism of the age, and the marvellous genius and art which it enlisted in its service. The masons of Holyrood did their work with their accustomed skill and care. The pillars, the groinings of the roof, the tracery of the windows are rich and beautiful, and the pile altogether is magnificent, or rather was, for ruin and neglect have now marred its glory, and one the less regrets the bulky and inartistic palace, the creation of the age of Charles II., that rises beside it, and hides the lovely but broken remains of the work of the architects of the twelfth century.

It is not necessary to suppose that the building was finished before the canons were brought to occupy it. It was enough if the cells and houses required for their daily use were erected and ready. This being the case, a body of canons-

<sup>1</sup> The spot where the hart is said to have vanished was the "Rood Well," now known as St Margaret's Well, and which flows full and clear as in David's days.



regular of the Rule of St Augustine was brought by David from the Abbey of St Andrews to his new abbey, which he dedicated to the Holy Rood, the Virgin Mary, and All Saints. The duty expected of the canons was to serve God, and the particular way in which they were to serve God was first, by giving themselves to spiritual meditation, and second, by saying daily masses for the soul of King David and those of his ancestors. That nothing might withdraw their thoughts from holy things or hinder their appointed work of daily masses, provision was made in magnificent style for their temporal wants and bodily comforts. In other words, the abbey was richly endowed. The charter of foundation still exists, having come into possession of the City of Edinburgh in 1633, when the citizens acquired the possessions of the abbey from the noble family of Roxburgh.<sup>1</sup>

The charter shows that the provision made for the canons by the King was on no stinted scale. Whatever the Scotland of that day produced they were permitted to share. There were few counties in which property of one kind or another had not been made over to them. They were great land-owners. Wherever there was carse or holm lands, watered by stream or river, or sheltered by wood or mountain, with a healthful amenity, one was sure to find acres not a few which the abbot and monks of Holyrood were permitted to call theirs. On the best of the pasture lands and the richest of the meadows they could fatten their kine, and prepare them for gracing in due season the table of the refectory. The corn of the richest soils filled their barns and was baked in their ovens. What of the produce of their wide and varied domains they did not need for their own consumption, they could carry to market without payment of the dues exigible

<sup>1</sup> See Chart of the Foundation of the Abbey of Holyrood in *Monasticon*, i. 140-144.



from the rest of the population. When the harvest had been gathered in, and the grain threshed out, the monks ground it into meal at their own mill, and thus escaped the tax of multure and of toll going and coming. The abbot's mule and the abbot's wagon, like the abbot himself, were privileged, and could pass to and fro on the highway without toll or tax. "I grant," says the monarch in his charter, "that the canons be free of all toll and custom in all my burghs and in all my lands for everything they buy and sell."

As if the riches of the land were not enough, the treasures of the deep were added thereto. In those rivers and estuaries which were known to be frequented by the salmon or other species of fish, the canons had a right to cast in their net as often as they pleased. The King gives them a "toft in Stirling, with the draught of a fishing net, a toft in Berwick, with the draught of two nets at Spittal, and a toft in Renfrew of five roods, and the draught of a net for salmon, and liberty to fish there for herring."<sup>1</sup> The King gives, moreover, in his charter liberty to erect salt pans, and commands his servants and foresters in the county of Stirling and Clackmannan, "to give the abbot and convent full liberty to take out of all my woods and forests as much wood as they please and desire for the building of their church and houses and other purposes."<sup>2</sup> They were empowered, moreover, to levy tithes on a great variety of articles. They were entitled to "one-half of the hides, skins, and tallow of the animals slaughtered in Edinburgh."<sup>3</sup> "The skins of all the rams, sheep, and lambs of my lordship of the Castle and of Linlithgow; eight chalders of meal, and eight of malt, and

<sup>1</sup> This is curious as showing the change that has taken place in the habits of the herring since David's day. This fish, scared doubtless by the traffic on the river, does not now come so far up as Greenock.

<sup>2</sup> *Monasticon*, i. 142.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, i. 143.

thirty cart-loads of brushwood of Libberton; the tithe of all whales and marine animals due to me from the river Avon as far as Cockburnspath," are among the privileges accorded them. They could levy dues on all ships entering the harbours of Leith and Perth, and over and above they received moneys from the King's exchequer.

As if all this store of wealth in corn-field and orchard, in meadow and holm, in fish and fowl, in tithes from the King's cellars and slaughter-houses, in oblations and dues from the people, had not been enough, the canons of Holyrood were made the owners of tofts or tenements in the various burghs of the kingdom.

These numerous dedications and gifts were but the first fruits of a greater harvest in years to come. The example of David called forth the liberality of others who strove to equal the King, and rival one another in showering on the abbey lands, churches, and other possessions. Robert, Bishop of St Andrews, granted them the church of Carriden, with two ploughgates of land. Thor, the son of Suanus, bestowed on them the church of Tranent, its lands, pastures, and tithes. There followed the church of Kinnel, with a ploughgate of land; the church of Paxtun and the church of Bathgate, with a ploughgate<sup>1</sup> of land, afterwards exchanged for certain lands in the Carse of Falkirk.

In the twelfth century, Fergus, Lord of Galloway, who afterwards became a monk of Holyrood, was a magnificent benefactor of the abbey. He and his son Uchtrech bestowed on the monks lands and eleven churches, four of which had belonged to the Culdees.<sup>2</sup> David, the son of Terr, contributed to the abbey twelve churches, situated in various

<sup>1</sup> As much land as a plough could till in one year, reckoned at 100 acres.

<sup>2</sup> *Monasticon*, i. 145, 146.



parts of the country, and some of which, it may be the better half, had been Columban establishments. To one of these twelve churches there attaches a tragic interest. This was the church of "St Mary-in-the-Fields," "on the site of which the College now stands, and which, under the popular name of the 'Kirk-of-Field,' was destined to be so tragically associated with the history of some future occupants of Holyrood."<sup>1</sup> At the Reformation, Adam Bothwell, Bishop of Orkney, was in possession of the revenues of the abbey, and it appears that twenty-seven churches still belonged to the great monastery of King David.

In the church of the abbey there were chapels and altars dedicated to various saints. In the Burgh Records of Canongate mention is made of "Our Ladye Altar," to which the "Ladye Land" belonged. There was too the "Abbot's Chapel," to which pertained two silver candelabra. There were, moreover, an Altar to the "Holy Cross," and the "Parish Altar."<sup>2</sup> There was an altar to St Andrew, and another to St Catherine, founded by George Creichton, Bishop of Dunkeld, who erected by the same deed the Alms House of St Thomas, near the Watergate. In this institution were lodged seven poor men, who were, upon Sundays and festivals, to put on "their red gowns, and, at high mass, sit before the altar of the chapel in the said conventual church, and there say fifty Ave Marias, five Pater Nosters, and one Credo."<sup>3</sup> There was an altar to St Stephen, and special mention is made of an altar dedicated to St Anne by the tailors of Edinburgh, and another to Saints Crispin and

<sup>1</sup> *Monasticon*, i. 146. "In the ancient 'Taxation of the Ecclesiastical Benefices' of the Archdeaconry of Lothian, found in the Treasury of Durham, and written in the reign of Edward I., there appears among the churches belonging to Holyrood, 'Ecclesia Sanctæ Mariæ in Campia.'" — *Priory of Coldingham* (Surtree's volume), Append. cxii.

<sup>2</sup> *Bannatyne Miscellany*, ii. 24.

<sup>3</sup> *Monasticon*, i. 148.



Crispinian, by the cordwainers or shoemakers of the city, with the statues of these saints upon it. "We are told that these altars were erected by the trades on the return of certain of their members, who had performed prodigies of valour in the Holy Land, where we are informed the famous 'Blue Blanket,' the standard of the bold craftsmen of Edinburgh, had waved conspicuous in the van of battle, before being suspended over the altar of St Eloi in the church of St Giles."<sup>1</sup>

Yearly stipends were provided for the canons whose duty it was to sing the *placebo* and *dirge*<sup>2</sup> on the anniversary of the death of the founder, and a mass on the day following for the repose of his soul. Moneys were paid for eight wax candles to light up the choir, altars, and tomb of the founder, as also for tapers burned at mass, and for ringing the great bell, and the hand-bells through the towns of Edinburgh and Canongate, and also for the bearers of torches about the altars and founder's tomb, and four wax candles to be burned on the said altars, decently adorned during the first and second vespers, and respective festivals throughout the year.

Whatever *placebo* and *dirge*, and mass and wax candles, and the ringing of bells could do for the welfare of the deceased monarch, it was surely the duty of the canons of Holyrood to see done. David had been mindful of their comfort, taking care that they should want for nothing. Not a day passed but the canons had cause to congratulate themselves on their founder's benevolent forethought. When mattins had been sung and early mass said, the fathers assembled in the refectory for breakfast. The sight of the

<sup>1</sup> *Monasticon*, i. 148.

<sup>2</sup> *Placebo*, certain prayers and aves for the repose of the soul. *Dirge*, the lament sung over the grave.

board, not to speak of the early hours enjoined by the convent ritual, was enough to awaken in the good canons a healthy appetite for the meal. The bread on the table was of the whitest, made from corn grown on the carse lands of Falkirk, and fired in the oven of the convent. There were milk, butter, and cheese from the rich pastures of Linlithgow, salmon and trout from the Tweed, herrings from the Clyde, pigeon from the dove-cots of the Abbey, and bacon of their own rearing, for one of the privileges of the canons was a free range for the swine of the abbey on the nuts and mast of the King's woods. A pot of good ale concluded the morning's repast.

When the dinner hour arrived the refectory board again groaned under a multitude of substantial and savoury dishes, purveyed by the diligent refectioner from the wide domains of the abbey, and skilfully dressed by the convent cook. There were sirloins of beef from the pastures of Corstorphine and Falkland, gigots of mutton from the grassy straths of Kintyre and Argyll, haunches of venison from the King's forest at Stirling, trout from St Mary's or Loch Leven, good ale from the kitchen of the Abbey, and a flagon of Burgundy or Rhenish, the produce of the dues exigible by the abbey on ships arriving from France or Flanders at the Port of Leith.

When the hour grew late, and the crags behind the abbey shone red in the evening light, the board was again spread. Vespers being hymned, and all the saints duly honoured, the good fathers gathered once more round the table and regaled themselves with the good things placed upon it, before retiring to rest. They wooed slumber—to be broken, in the case of certain of them, by midnight vigils or early orisons—with a slice of buck or deer, a little fruit from the orchards of Airth, a tankard of home brewed, or a cup of foreign wine which some good ship, plying betwixt Dunkirk and

Bordeaux and the harbours of Leith and Perth, had imported for the regalement of the fathers.

We can pardon the worthy canons if, before laying them down for the night under the protection of the Holy Rood, they sought to relieve the graver thoughts inspired by the wearisome routine of the day by passing an hour in light diversions and pleasantries; a bit of city gossip, for instance, a bout of raillery at the expense of a frail brother, the recital of the legend of some saint; or it might chance to them to gather round some newly arrived traveller, who brought news from beyond the Rhine or the Alps, and told them how the great war which the mitre was waging against the empire was progressing, and how the course of that momentous struggle had been signalised by an episode of an astonishing kind, in which an emperor had been seen doing homage to the majesty of the pontiff, by undergoing penance, amid the snows of winter, at the castle gates of Canossa.



## CHAPTER XXI.

### INTERIOR OF ABBEY—ROUTINE OF DAILY SERVICES— DUTIES OF THE SEVERAL FUNCTIONARIES—BENEFIT TO SOCIETY ?

LET us go inside the abbey, and survey the arrangements and order of the house, and in particular, let us note how the monks pass the hours of the day. A pious and bounteous patron has done all in his power to exempt them from every mundane anxiety, and leave them at liberty to devote their every minute and their every thought to the performance of their spiritual duties. The lilies of the field which "toil not neither do they spin," are not more free from care than are the inhabitants of this little Eden. The primeval curse, which dooms man to eat his bread in the sweat of his face, is here unknown. Lands, tenements, immunities, heritages of every kind has David lavished upon them. Now comes the important question, as to what the men for whom so much has been done do for others ? What are the services rendered to the world by those who possess such stores of wealth and such boundless leisure ? This question we shall be better able to answer when we have seen the interior of the abbey and its routine of duties.

The monastic day was divided into seven times or periods. At each division the abbey bell was rung, the monks were assembled, and the service appointed for the hour was duly performed. The first division was PRIME, or six o'clock in the morning, the time being taken from the abbey dial, for

clocks had not yet been invented. The monks rose at this hour, and after prayers said mass for the soul of the founder and benefactors. Breakfast of course followed. This meal despatched, it might happen that a "chapter" required to be held. If a brother had transgressed the rules of the convent, or fallen into other fault, his case was brought under the consideration of the chapter, and he was dealt with as his offence was found to deserve. The discipline of the convent was very little spiritual. The peccant monk might have to undergo a flogging. This chastisement was administered with more or less severity. There was a rule, doubtless, regulating the number of stripes, but their intensity as well as number has to be taken into account in estimating the pain of the infliction; and seeing they were administered by sympathetic brethren who themselves might one day be overtaken in a fault, we may safely conclude that those whose duty it was to administer this discipline leaned to the side of leniency. Or the offender was arrayed in an old sack, or he had to walk bare-foot in his drawers, or perambulate the precincts of the convent carrying the lantern of penance. There was a touch of humour in this discipline, but we may doubt whether it did much to convince of sin, or aid in the cultivation of holiness.

At nine o'clock of the forenoon came TIERCE, which was marked by no special duty. The forenoon was spent by the fathers in the occupation or amusement which was most congenial to the taste of each. Some betook them to study, others to the copying of manuscripts, especially the writings of the fathers and the legends of the saints, or the embellishing of missals. These last were executed with a rare skill, an amazing accuracy, and a rich and brilliant beauty. Others of the fathers having a taste for gardening, spent the  
( in this delightful occupation.

At noon came SEXT. The monks, throwing down book, and pen, and spade, crowded into the refectory, and sat down to dinner. One and all dined at the same table. They ate in silence, while one of their number read to them. The topics of conversation were not then numerous, and the members of the brotherhood had many other opportunities of exchanging ideas, and the book at meal-time was the more endurable inasmuch as no one was compelled to listen. The good monks, engrossed in their dish, might even be altogether oblivious of what was being read.

The NONES were from two to three, when the monks, having dined, walked in the garden or strolled outside the grounds of the abbey, or chatted with the burghers of the Canongate, with whom they commonly lived in good neighbourhood. At four o'clock, or it might be later, came Vespers. At seven all were expected to be within doors to sing COMPLINE. After this supper was served, and this last meal of the day ended, the fathers retired to their several dormitories and laid them down on a straw or chaff mattress, beneath a single coverlet, with a taper which burned in their cells all night through. At midnight they were again summoned from their beds to mattins and laud. These duly performed, they went back to their dormitories and slept till PRIME. They then arose to go through the same routine. So passed the day, so passed all the days of the year, and so passed all the years of life. The conventual brotherhood, like a clock wound up, went on day after day and year after year, striking *prime*, and *tierce*, and *sext*, and *compline*: *prime*, and *tierce*, and *sext*, and *compline*, till death came and rang the great final *compline*, and the poor monk fell into a deeper sleep and a profounder silence than even that of the convent, from which, let us



fondly hope, not a few awoke to sing *mattins* and *laud* in the morning light of the eternal day.<sup>1</sup>

Let us enumerate the officers of the abbey, with their several functions. Our description is not restricted to a particular abbey, it applies to that whole class of institutions. An abbey was not much of a church, and though coming under the category of a religious establishment, the spirit dominant in it was not religious, but secular and worldly. It was a kingdom in miniature.

First came the abbot. He was the monarch of the little kingdom. He exercised autocratic sway. He must obey the rule of the abbey : it was his first duty, even as the first duty of the inmates was to obey the abbot. A high and mighty lord was the abbot. His state and magnificence were regal. When he rode out all must show him obeisance, and in order to this he was preceded by his chaplains carrying the ensigns of his dignity. When he visited a church or a monastery the bells were rung, the priests and monks came forth, and forming in procession, welcomed him with every mark of honour and token of reverence. The mitred abbots took precedence of the others. In virtue of the temporal barony attached to their office they sat in Parliament, rode to battle in a coat of mail, appeared on the hunting-field with a hawk on their wrist, or went the circuit as judges. The abbot could bestow investiture of knighthood, and sometimes he stood sponsor for the children of the blood royal.

After the abbot came the prior. He was in the priory what the abbot was in the abbey, its head and chief. When the prior resided in the abbey he was of course the subordinate of the abbot, his vice-gerent. In the absence of the abbot he exercised his authority, which, of course, he

<sup>1</sup> See *Monasticon*, i. 8, 9, 10.

demitted on the abbot's return. The prior too was a very worshipful personage, and was waited on with every mark of respect and reverence. He had horses and servants for his use, and when he showed himself in public his train was nearly as imposing as that of the abbot, to whom he was held to be not greatly inferior in wisdom and holiness. He had the power of imprisoning refractory canons, though not of expelling them from the community. There was a prior for every ten canons.

The functionary next in rank was the precentor or chanter. This office could be filled only by a monk who had been educated in the monastery from a child. He presided over the psalmody, an office of great importance, seeing monastic worship consisted largely of choral services. The precentor was charged with the care of other things besides the chants. He was keeper of the sacred robes; he distributed to each the dress in which he was to appear at the public festivals, and when the procession marched out he took his place at the head of it. He was, moreover, custodier of the archives, in other words chief librarian, an office not very onerous in those days.

Next came the cellarer. He was chief of the commissariat of the abbey or priory. He was to see to the proper victualling of the establishment, and mete out daily provision for the inmates. He must take care that there was no scarcity in the abbey barn, and no stint or pinch at the refectory table. He must permit no one to sit down to dinner till first the abbot and prior have taken their seats, and when the repast has ended, he must collect the spoons and other vessels and carry them to the kitchen, where they were to remain under his charge. He was to do special honour to the abbot's spoon, by carrying it in his right hand and the spoons of the canons in his left.

Next came the Treasurer or bursar. He collected the rents of the abbey estates, discharged the wages of the servants, and paid all moneys due for work done for the abbey. The Sacristan was to uncover the altar after the gospel, and carry a lantern before the priest as he went from the altar to the lectern. He had the charge of the sacred vestments, bells, banners, cups, candles, altar-cloths, and wafers for communion. He had the privilege of sleeping in the church, which was allowed to no one else, without special permission from the abbot. Another officer was the Almoner. Among other duties proper to his office, the almoner had to buy cloth and shoes, and distribute them to widows and orphans at Christmas. He had to collect the wine left at table after dinner, and bestow it in alms. The Cook presided in the kitchen, with a staff of assistants. The office was never conferred on any but such as had made the art their study. The Infirmarer, as his name imports, had charge of the sick, taking care of their meals, and every day, after compline, sprinkling their beds with holy water. He was to see that no one remained in bed on pretence of being ill when mattins and laud were being sung, and before midnight he went round the wards of his infirmary, lantern in hand, to ascertain who were really ill and who were only lazy. In cases of sudden death he was empowered to hear confession and administer absolution. Next came the Porter. He held a responsible trust, seeing the safety of the community depended on his fidelity. A monk of middle age and of established character was commonly selected for this post. He slept at the gate, and when the bell was rung for compline he locked the outer door and carried the keys to the abbot.

The Refectoryer as the name implies, had charge of all that appertained to the refectory table—its cups, plate, dishes.



towels ; he must see that all are clean. He was bound to provide fresh rushes five times a year wherewith to strew the floor of the refectory, and also to deal out the wine to the monks which was fetched from the abbot's cellar. The Chamberlain had charge of the apartments. He was responsible for the bedding, clothes, combs, and other necessities of the monks. He was "once a year to have the dormitory swept, and the straw of the beds changed." "The monks were to go to the baths when he saw it necessary."<sup>1</sup> Last of all came the Hospitaller. His duty was to receive the stranger or the wayfaring poor, and conduct them to the hospice or guest-chamber.

Such was the internal arrangement of the abbey and priory. It was perfect. From its head, the abbot, who sat in solemn state in his sumptuously furnished chamber, down to the porter and hospitaller, who waited at the gate to receive the pilgrim, every one had his place and his work, and the establishment went on with the steadiness and regularity of a skilfully constructed machine. Duly the abbey bell was rung. Duly the monks come forth at its summons from their cells, with psalm and chant. Duly the festivals of the church were observed. Duly candle was lighted on the tomb of the founder and mass said for his soul. Duly the fathers sat down to dine and retired to sleep. The order, the punctuality, and the obedience of the little community are admirable ; but we are tempted to say, "go forward, you but march in a circle." You have chanted, meditated, and prayed long enough within the abbey walls, open the gates and let all this pent-up devotion have vent in work undertaken in the outside world. Of what use are all these pious acts and holy thoughts if they perish on the spot where they had birth, and do not bear fruit for the well-being of men ?

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs*.

The country which has made over the best of its broad acres for your use, expects some such service at your hands, and if it is not rendered there is no reason why the abbey should exist at all ; for surely the abbey is here for the country, and not the country for the abbey.

In closing the chapter we turn for a moment to the question, how far did the abbeys and monasteries contribute to the enlightenment of their age and the progress of civilization ? Some have lauded these institutions as inestimable, and bewailed their overthrow as an irreparable loss to the cause of knowledge and religion. We have no wish to depreciate their services ; on the contrary, we are willing to estimate them at the very highest ; still we are unable to see that the world owes them much, or has any great cause to regret their extinction. We may admit that some few of their inmates, despite the inherent vitiousness of the system, were worthy persons ; that they were better informed than the majority of laymen of their time ; that some of them showed equal diligence and skill in transcribing manuscripts and illuminating missals ; that they knew a little surgery, gave alms out of their abundance, and were always ready with their welcome to the palmer, from whom, in return for the good cheer of the monastery, they hoped to hear the news of the country from which he had come. We may also grant that their estates and farms were better cultivated than the lands of their neighbours, their richer capital and more numerous serfs enabling them to practise an advanced husbandry. And we are delighted also to think that in the monastery there were a few truly pious souls who had come to the knowledge and love of the Saviour from some page of Augustine or some verse of the Bible, and who cherished the divine life in that ungenial air, by drinking at secret fountains, nor drinking alone, for sometimes they would suc-



ceed in leading others to the same living waters ; but when we have enumerated all this, we have given the sum of all that monasteries did for their age.

On the other side, what, we ask, was their religion ? What power could it possibly have in expanding the understanding or purifying the heart ? It cannot but be evident to all that it lay mainly in meats and drinks, in the wearing of a certain habit, in the practice of fasts and penances, in the regular performance of certain ceremonies, in the repetition of certain chants and prayers, in burning tapers and singing masses. But where is the record of their labours in planting schools, in instructing the young, in consoling the sick and dying, or in carrying the light of Christianity to pagan lands. We possess the splendid record of the Church of Columba ; we see her missionaries hastening across seas with the tidings of life to nations sitting in darkness. But where have we such record of the Roman Church in Scotland ? So far from dispelling the night she permitted the darkness to grow deeper, century after century, till Scotland, once the school of Europe, had become well-nigh as barbarous a land as before its great apostle stepped upon its shore.

It is often pleaded that the monastic institutions of Rome were the best arrangements for the public good which the age admitted of. There is not a particle of truth or force in this plea. It is effectually rebutted by the fact that at an earlier age, and in times still more unpropitious, it was found possible to set up and keep working a class of institutions, of a far higher order both intellectually and religiously. No age could be darker, and no country more barbarous than was Scotland when Columba crossed the sea to plant it with schools of the evangelical faith. The Columban institutions, instead of succumbing to the darkness around them, grappled with it and conquered it. If the abbey had had a particle of



spiritual power in it it would have triumphed in like manner. The fact is, it never made the attempt. As the abbey system developed the degeneracy of the age increased; the darkness thickened; arts and letters had risen with Iona, and they fell with Iona. The expert scribe and the cunning artificer disappeared from Scotland. The refinement of past centuries had given place to semi-barbarism; while the abbey, rich in broad acres, in holy chimes and rosy monks, looked complacently down on a dying land which its grandeur mocked. In truth, the "abbey" created the age, and what some make its defence is its strongest condemnation. The piety of the abbey was pantomime, its learning was dilletanteism, and its civilization lacquered barbarism. In order to save the last vestiges of enlightenment and religion it was found necessary at last to clear away the system altogether. It was fit only for children and dotards, and if ever again the world shall fall back into dotage it will restore the monastic system.

## CHAPTER XXII.

FOUNDING OF ABBEYS CONTINUED—ABBEYS NORTH OF  
THE GRAMPIANS—IN VALLEY OF THE TWEED, MEL-  
ROSE, KELSO, ETC.—VARIOUS ORDERS OF FRIARS—  
SERMONS OF THE FRIARS—OUTLOOK OF SCOTLAND.

WE continue our narration of the founding of the abbeys, priories, and monasteries. The ancient face of Scotland was rapidly disappearing: a new land was rising to take the place of the old. But the change was mainly on the surface. Deep down, hidden from view by the Roman ecclesiasticism and the Norman lacquering with which King David had overlaid it, was the old Culdee Scotland. It will slumber for a few centuries, and then when the spiritual heavens have completed their appointed revolutions, and their eternal influences have begun again to act on the nation, Columba, rising from his grave, as it were, will rebuild the fallen sanctuaries of the early Church of Scotland, and its second day will be more glorious than its first.

Only some of the abbeys and ecclesiastical foundations shall we notice, and these briefly. We have already recorded the incident which led Alexander I. to found the Abbey of Inchcolm. This abbey adjoins the metropolis of Scotland, from which, on a clear morning or calm evening, its ruins may be descried in the waters of the Forth; around it an air of seclusion and stillness as profound as if, instead of the neighbourhood of a great capital, it were placed, like Iona, amid the seas of the Hebrides. Its buildings are

still wonderfully entire, more so than most of our abbeys. Their position on an island may help to account for their good preservation, for the ravages of man are even more destructive than those of time. "The stone-roofed octagonal chapter house is one of the most beautiful and perfect in Scotland, and the abbot's house, refectory, and cloisters are still comparatively entire."<sup>1</sup> The square tower which rises in the centre of the cathedral, and which forms so prominent an object in the ruins, is so similar in its architecture and form to that at Iona as to warrant the conclusion that the two are probably of the same age. Among its buildings is a cell more primitive and rude than the other chambers, and possibly, it may be, as some have asserted, the cell in which King Alexander lived during the three days the storm kept him a prisoner on the island.<sup>2</sup>

The name of its patron saint Columba lent the abbey a high repute for sanctity. From the time it was changed from a settlement of Columbites to a priory of Augustinian monks it began to be richly endowed. Lands, houses, churches, and villages flowed in upon it, and the successors of the poor anchorite, whose subsistence had been "the milk of one cow, and shell-fish," saw their barns overflow with grain, and malt, and fruits, the produce of their numerous estates, and their cellars stocked with barrels of beer from the neighbouring breweries, and hogsheads of wine from the vineyards of France. Donibristle and other fair estates on the northern banks of the Forth, with numerous churches inland in Fife; tofts in Edinburgh, Cramond, Haddington,

<sup>1</sup> *Monasticon*, i. 60.

<sup>2</sup> On one occasion when Sir James Simpson visited the island, he found this interesting cell the abode of two pigs; on another visit he found it tenanted by a cow. More tragic facts have come to light in connection with the abbey. "A human skeleton was found several years ago immured and built up within these old ecclesiastical walls."—*Monasticon*, i. 54.



and other cities in the Lothians, the gifts of David and succeeding kings, swelled the rent roll of the abbey. One gift is so peculiar as to deserve special mention. It is that of "a thousand eels yearly out of Strathendry, in the parish of Leslie," along with two swine and a cow, secured to the canons on no less an authority than the bull of Pope Alexander III.<sup>1</sup>

The monkish chroniclers have taken care to endow Inchcolm as richly with miracles as David and other kings with lands. Columba was believed to make it the object of his special care, and if injury was done the monks, the evil doer soon felt the vengeance of the saint. If the convent was broken into and its treasures rifled, there was sure to arise such a storm in the Forth as compelled the spoilers to return to the island with their ill-gotten gain, or cast it into the sea. Lying in the Forth it was exposed to the ravages of the Danish pirates, but never was sea-robber allowed to make off quietly with his booty: he was either driven back by the angry winds, or he encountered shipwreck on Inchkeith; and all, according to the chroniclers, by the interposition of Columba. But great saints like great poets sometimes nod. Columba must have been asleep or on a journey when the following mishap befell the monks of Inchcolm. The abbot and members of the convent, as Bower tells us, had passed the summer and autumn of 1421 on the mainland, to escape the visits of the English rovers. On Saturday, the 8th of November, the whole community returned to the island, effecting the short voyage in safety. On the morrow, being Sunday, the abbot sent the *Cellarer* to the mainland to fetch some provisions, and certain barrels of beer which were lying at the brewery of Barnhill. The

<sup>1</sup> *Aberdour and Inchcolme*, by Dr William Ross, p. 121. See in Dr Ross's work an enumeration of the various possessions of Inchcolm.

goods were shipped, and about three in the afternoon the boat set out on its return to the island. The sailors not satisfied with the progress made by the oar, and having tested the qualities of the beer before embarking, hoisted the sail to quicken speed. That moment a sudden squall struck the boat, tore the canvas in rags, and the steersman letting go the helm, the vessel filled and went down. Of the six persons on board, the *Cellarer* and two sailors were drowned; the other three were saved. Sir Peter, the canon, was an hour and a half in the sea clinging all the while to a rope, the one end of which was held, the chronicler tells us, by Columba. Sir Peter afterwards confidently affirmed that the saint appeared to him in bodily form. The other two owed their escape from a watery grave to an interposition of a much more commonplace character. Some one who witnessed their sad plight managed to throw them a wisp of straw, which kept them afloat till a boat had been sent to their rescue. The moral which Bower wishes to impress by the story, is that the three men who were saved from drowning had all of them that day been present at mass in the parish church of Dalgety.<sup>1</sup>

The Abbey of Inchcolm in after times became famous as a place of sepulture. The monastery was within the diocese of Dunkeld, and several of the bishops of that See were buried in the church of the abbey. Of some, the heart only, while the body reposed at Dunkeld. But, in truth, in the Isle of St Colme sleep the dead of various nationalities. Danish pirates who came to rob, but were slain in fight, received here unceremonious burial. English rovers who visited the island for a like purpose met here their fate, and were thrown into a grave over which was sung neither

<sup>1</sup> Dr W. Ross, *Aberdour and Inchcolme*, pp. 116, 117. See also *Monasticon*, i. 54, 55, and *Scotichronicon*, lib. xv., cap. 38, and lib. xiii., cap. 34.



dirge nor requiem. In after days the abbey buildings experienced great variety of fortune. Ceasing to be the abode of abbot and monk, they were turned to very ordinary uses indeed. At one time we find the abbey a receptacle of pirates; at another, a lazaretto, and ships arriving in the Forth with the plague on board are ordered to disembark their crews on St Colme. Some of the early Jameses made it a state prison, and in our own day we have seen it once more, now a barrack, and now a lazaretto.

Agès before Burns and Scott had arisen to invest the landscapes of Scotland with a beauty and grandeur that fascinate so many beholders, now that the magic of their verse has unveiled their glories, the monks had shown their appreciation of the noble characteristics of the Scottish land by selecting the richest, the sweetest, and the most picturesque spots to be found in it as the place of their habitation. They planted their abbeys and priories thickly in the borderland, setting them down by the "rushing Gala" and the "silvery Tweed," and other streams which roll along amid smiling pastoral hills, and dales of mingled woodland and cornfield, presenting a picture of loveliness which delights the eye, and suggesting a sense of plenty that gladdens the heart. Nor was it only in the Lowlands amid the fatness of meadow and the riches of corn land that the monastic colonists fixed their encampments. Beyond the Grampians they knew that all was not barren rock and profitless moor. They had exploited the region of the Dee and the Spey, and found in the vales watered by these rivers many a rich acre and many a sheltered nook where monk might pitch his tent and eat of the good of the land. The solitudes of the north had a charm for meditative minds. The straths, so lonely and still, offered nothing to distract the mind or draw the thoughts away from those higher things which are supposed to form



the subjects of monkish meditation. The gigantic hills planting their feet amid the dark green pines, and losing their summits as they tower upwards among the clouds, presented spectacles of grandeur which nursed in those who daily looked on them and drew inspiration from them, strength and sublimity of soul. There were besides the fine fertile plains of Moray, the bosky glens of Ross-shire, the superb valley of the Ness, offering numerous eligible spots for those who wished to sing their aves and recite their paternosters in peace, and to know the while that when the dinner hour arrived they should find the refectory table loaded with the best which the region produced, choice venison, and abundance of both sea and river fish. The fathers had learned the art, though they had not been taught the phrase, of "making the best of both worlds."

There were other considerations, doubtless, which drew the steps of this host of colonists in cowl and frock across the Grampians. They remembered that this region had been the consecrated ground of the Columban Church. Here was the first scene of Columba's evangelization, and here had he planted numerous settlements. The new monks had come to undo the labours of the earlier evangelists, but they did not on that account disdain to build on the foundations of their predecessors. What of the Culdee churches had not gone altogether to decay, and what of their revenues had not been devoured by the greed of mormaer and the avariciousness of lay-abbot, would, as a matter of course, fall to their lot, and form the nucleus of new and richer endowments. Accordingly, on all the old sites of Columban occupation we now see conventual establishments of the Roman type springing up; as, for instance, at Monimusk, at Deer, at Turriff, at Urquhart, at Kinloss, at Rosemarkie, at Ferne, at St Duthac, at Dornoch, and other places, Augustinian, Benedictine, and

Cistercian, drawn by instinct to the old sites in the belief, in which they were not mistaken, that there they should find the air mellowed and the soil fructified by the former presence of the Columban brotherhood.

The fine appreciation of physical qualities displayed by the monks in the selection of their resting places is seen in Melrose. A rare combination of earth, and air, and stream, and sheltering hill renders that valley a delightful residence. There, accordingly, we see them planting one of their chief colonies, and rearing one of their proudest cathedrals. The foundation of the monastery of Melrose takes us back to the middle of the seventh century. Its earlier history connects itself with that of St Cuthbert, who is said to have lived in it ten years, from 651 to 661.<sup>1</sup> At that early day there was not a Roman monk to be seen in the land; and the monastery of Melrose, a humble fabric doubtless, existed as an offshoot of Iona. Like so many other offshoots of Iona it changed its character under King David. In the year 1136 it was converted into a Cistercian monastery. The Cistercian order was then at the height of its renown. The mother house was Clairvaux in France. From Clairvaux a little colony of Cistercians migrated to England, and were established in the abbey of Rievaulx in Yorkshire. From Rievaulx, King David, who had a special predilection for the order, brought a body of Cistercians to people his Abbey of Melrose. The fathers must have been ill to please if they were not delighted with the externals of their new abode. Inside only could there have been seen despondency or gloom; nor can we wonder if its walls enclosed not a few drooping hearts, for now we behold the fathers beginning that dreary round of ritualistic performances which monk was doomed to tread, day after day, till death snatched the bead roll from

<sup>1</sup> Bede. *Scots. Celtic History of Scotland*, ii. 206.

his hand, and the convent bell sounded its summons for him no more.

The Abbey of Melrose, as a matter of course, was richly dowered. Its Cistercian brotherhood, though a foreign importation, could cast their eyes over Scotland and say of not a few of its choicest spots, "They are ours." What right had they to be there at all? They had not fought for the country against the Dane, yet now we find King David gifting its land away to the disinheriting of the men whose sires had shed their blood for the independence of the nation over which he reigned, and the existence of the throne on which he sat. Not content, it would seem, with the ample supply which was daily passing in at the convent gates from all parts of Scotland, the Cistercians aimed at enriching the revenues of their lands by the profits arising from mercantile pursuits. An incident in the history of the abbey exhibits the fathers in the character of traders. Richard II. of England in the year 1385 slept a night at Melrose. Next morning before departing his soldiers set fire to the abbey and burned it. The sacriligious act of his army weighed on the conscience of the king, and, by way of compensation to the monks, he granted them a remission of two pence of duty on every thousand sacks of wool imported from Berwick. The purchases of the monks must have been considerable if this small remission of duty was adequate compensation for the loss sustained by the burning of their abbey. This amount of wool was much beyond what was needed for the use of the fathers, and the greater portion of it was sold doubtless by the monks to the population, by whom it would be worked up into cloth. The abbey had a stormy career. Oftentimes its buildings sank in ashes to rise again from their ruins. The valley of the Tweed was the main entrance-gate of the English armies when on their march



to subjugate Scotland. Hardly ever did they pass this way without leaving their mark on this and the sister abbeys of the borderland. These are the destroyers which converted our ecclesiastical edifices into picturesque ruins. After the War of Independence, Melrose Abbey rose in a glory which is still able to delight the visitor. No part of the present ruins is older than the fifteenth century. King Robert the Bruce bequeathed to the abbey a singular possession; his own heart even, which the Bruce requested the Douglas to convey to the Holy Land, but the noble bearer of the precious relic perishing in a battle with the Saracens, it was brought back from Spain and deposited within the precincts of Melrose Abbey.

Some dozen miles south from Melrose stands the abbey of Jedburgh. It was founded by David while still Earl of Cumbria, and was at first a priory, afterwards elevated to the rank of abbey, and stocked with canons-regular from Beauvais. It possessed ample lands in Tweeddale, and had numerous dependencies in distant parts of Scotland. It exercised over all its lands the right of regality, that is, the power of trying offenders and putting them to death. This was a dangerous power to be lodged in such hands, and was often grossly perverted for the defence of criminals instead of their punishment, and the defying of the king's laws in the room of upholding them. During the minority of James V. the abbot of Jedburgh was accused of giving harbourage within the sacred walls of his abbey to the brigands of the Forest, which led to a war betwixt the abbot and the Duke of Albany, then regent of the kingdom. These were not exactly the uses for which the abbey had been founded and endowed, and if in this way it drew upon itself attack and demolition, it had no one but its proud and turbulent abbot to blame for its misfortunes.

Lying still further into the border country than Melrose, Jedburgh Abbey suffered more from the incessant raids and spoilzies of which this district of Scotland was then the theatre. In some years it dropped its ecclesiastical character altogether, and became little better than a military fort. Instead of litanies and prayers in its oratory, and shorn monks going in and out at its gates, it was filled with armed men and rung with the sounds of battle. Now it was the fierce borderers that held it, and flung defiance from its walls at some storming party of English; and there were occasions on which the defence was so obstinate that, rather than yield, the besieged submitted to be burned in their stronghold. At times the canons would doff surplice and rosary, and, arming themselves with mail-shirt and sword, would take their stand by the side of the warlike burghers, and mingling in the conflict would contest every inch of the ground, retreating before the enemy from the court of the abbey to the church, from the church to the tower, and seeing they could retreat no further, standing at bay, and holding the tower in defiance of fire and steel till it was wrapt in flames and all in it had perished. On one occasion we find the abbey garrisoned by the Spanish as the allies of the English, while the French, then in alliance with the Scots, are the besiegers. This was the sort of life, a rough one verily, which the Abbey of Jedburgh led for some two centuries. Better for the tranquillity of the district that never had one stone of it been laid upon another. It drew into the rich valley of the Jed the tempests of war, and doomed the inhabitants to see the produce of their fields trampled into the dust by armed men, and themselves given over to die by the sword or by the flame.

We notice next the Abbey of Kelso. It stands hard by the confluence of the Tweed and the Teviot. The united

stream rolling along, adding its fertilising influence to a rich soil and a warm air, makes the valley a paradise of flower and fruit, of meadow and golden grain. The ruins of the abbey are the only sinister feature in a landscape otherwise sweet and peaceful. They stand up in unadorned strength, liker the remains of a Norman castle than the former abode of peaceful monks; and in truth the abbey has had as warlike a history as the military aspect of its ruins bespeak for it. It stood, even more than Jedburgh, on the great highway of war, and suffered from Edward and his soldiers. When it had rest from their depredations it was subject to the no less destructive incursions of the freebooters of the border. The wealth believed to be hoarded in it made these unpleasant neighbours not infrequent visitors in the valley of the Tweed, and on these occasions their rapacity and violence fell indiscriminately on monk and husbandman, on serf and lord; and abbey and district led an unquiet and anxious life.

The order established at Kelso was that of the Tyronenses, so called from Tyron, a town of Picardy, in the north of France. There was the head establishment of the order of which Robert of Abbeville was the founder (1109). Monkeny being but the outward and mechanical imitation of a separation and purity which are spiritual and inward, was unable to maintain itself for any long time in the estate of its original institution. Order after order sunk into gross degeneracy. A remedy was sought in the institution of new orders, associated under stricter regulations, but these being also works of the flesh in due time developed, according to the law of their nature, into fleshly corruption. The famous St Bernard thought he had discovered a cure for this inevitable tendency to putrify. Brought up in the strictest school of asceticism, and having a salutary dread of whatever tended to effeminacy, he thought it not good that the whole



time of a monk should be given to meditation ; and as the best preservative from the temptations which are incident to idleness he sought to devise occupation for both head and hands of the recluses. Accordingly in the order in which he took so great an interest, the monk and the citizen were conjoined. Among the Tyronenses there were found skilful farmers, expert carpenters and smiths, while others of the order excelled in the arts of architecture and drawing. Their hours of devotion alternated with periods of manual labour, and this made them all the more able to withstand the allurements of the wine cup and other solicitations which beset the indolence of the monastery.

The Tyronensian Abbey of Kelso was endowed with lands in Peeblesshire and other parts of Scotland. The See of York strove to subject it to its jurisdiction, and exercise metropolitan power over it. The dispute was referred to Rome, and the reigning Pope, Alexander III., decided in favour of its independence, and soon thereafter the abbey rose to eminence, and planted itself out in other monastic houses. The great Abbey of Arbroath was supplied with monks from Kelso, and was at its beginning a dependency of the southern establishment. But soon the daughter surpassed the mother in magnificence, and the proud abbots of the princely house on the shore of Angus disdained to be subject to the older but less powerful abbey on the Tweed. The other offshoots of Kelso were Lesmahagow, Lindores, and Kilwinning. On these establishments the right of sanctuary was conferred. Their door stood open to the murderer and the robber, who once across its threshold was safe, and so long as he chose to remain under its roof was shielded from the arm of the law. The ground was holy ; the foot of justice would but pollute it. The terms on which this right was bestowed on the Abbey of Lesmahagow were as follows :

"Whoso for escaping peril of life and limb shall flee to the said cell, or come within the four crosses that stand round it, of reverence to God and St Machutus, I grant them my firm peace." It appears from the Canons of the Scottish Church, drawn up by the Councils held at Perth in 1242 and 1269, that the abuse of "sanctuary" had become such that it was not uncommon for robbers to pursue their nefarious trade during the day, and at night retire to the church to sleep, whence they issued next morning to resume their unholy occupation. Before beginning the business of a new day the robber must needs have absolution for the deeds of the previous one, which was not to be obtained without a large sum, in the name of penance, to the church.

Among the temporalities granted to the abbey was the town of Kelso. The abbot was constituted its feudal lord, and as such had the right to say who was to be admitted on the roll of its burghers; who was to have the privilege of carrying on any trade or profession in the town; who could buy or sell in its market, and on what terms. And further, as their feudal superior, the abbot had the power of trying offenders, and adjudging them to punishment: in short, he had the lives of its citizens in his hands. In this way grew up that power of civil jurisdiction which the Roman Church wielded in our country in the middle ages, and of which she made so cruel a use, when it drew towards the Reformation. Its abbots, priors, and bishops constituted themselves into a court of law, tried causes, and pronounced sentence on those it pleased them to regard as offenders, consigning to prison, or dooming them to strangling and burning. They could employ the arm of the civil power to execute their cruel decrees. We do not hesitate to say that it was basely unpatriotic on the part of David and other Scottish kings to give to ecclesiastics such a power over the

natives of the soil. We must bear in mind that these ecclesiastics were foreigners. From their abbot downwards every man of them was an alien in blood as well as in religion; yet what do we see the kings of Scotland doing? Why, robbing their own subjects to enrich a horde of greedy churchmen from across the sea. What had this army of mummers done that they must be fed on the best of the land, till they wax fat, and play the tyrant and make the Scottish people hewers of wood and drawers of water to them? And who gave David a right to sell his subjects into the power of a foreign priesthood, and endow that priesthood with the acres the Scots had tilled for generations, and the churches in which their fathers had worshipped in old time? The real character of what David now did can neither be concealed nor justified. To say that it was an act of piety and devotion is to use language which affronts religion. It is not religion to sell one's country, or gift away the properties, the liberties, and the lives of its citizens to aliens, and if it is a king who does it, the crime is only the more heinous in that it is done by the man whose duty it is, before that of all others, to defend the honour of his country, and the freedom and happiness of his subjects.

When we come to survey Scotland under the Papacy we shall be in circumstances better fitting us to answer the question, What benefits did the monastic system confer on our country? At present we dismiss the subject with a few more facts of a general kind touching the incoming of the monastic corps.

The canons-regular of St Augustine were, we have seen, the first to arrive in Scotland, in the year 1114, in their white tunics and black gowns. They showed a marvellous aptitude to spawn and multiply. Twenty years had not elapsed since their first coming into the country till we find



the Augustinians at Scone, at St Andrews, at Holyrood, at Inchcolm, and at other places. Eventually they had not fewer than twenty-seven houses in Scotland. Other orders followed. The gates of the country once opened, host after host of these cell-bred men marched in and squatted down on the land. Had they come in mail their entrance would have been challenged; but the insight of the Scots had departed with the gospel, and they permitted themselves to be conquered by a worse foe than the Dane without fighting a battle. After the Augustinians came the Red Friars or Redemptorists, founded 1198; the Black Friars or Dominicans, founded 543; the White Friars, or Carmelites, who hailed originally from Mount Carmel.<sup>1</sup> There followed, or it may be preceded,—for we cannot be sure of the exact order in which this hooded and speckled army arrived in our country or fix the year when their “holy” feet first touched its soil,—the Premonstratenses from Prémontré in France, the Cluniacenses from Clugny, the Benedictines, the Tyronenses, the Cistercians, the Carthusians, and the Franciscans. Troop after troop came rolling into our country, and their houses began to dot the land north and south.

Coeval with the planting of houses for men, we find houses for women springing up in various parts of the kingdom. The Cistercian convent at Berwick had several nunneries attached to it.<sup>2</sup> This monastery was afterwards suppressed by Robert III. in 1391, for favouring the English, and the Abbey of Dryburgh was endowed with its property. It may interest the reader to know, when he thinks who

<sup>1</sup> The Carmelites had at least one home in Scotland. A Carmelite Priory was founded at South Queensferry in 1330 by Sir George Dundas, as attested by documents in the charter chest of the family. After the Reformation it passed into possession of the Crown, and was given back by James VI. to the family of its founder, Dundas of Dundas. It is now undergoing restoration as a place of worship.

<sup>2</sup> Of Alexander II., John Major says, ““Ubique locorum mulieres religiose instituuntur.” *Hist. Scot.*, lib. iv. cap. 10, p. 146.

sleeps in that abbey, that Dryburgh was a Premonstratensian establishment. Nor did King David stop at this point. He introduced into his kingdom the military orders of the Knights Hospitallers, the Knights Templars, and the Lazarists of Jerusalem.

David gave the finishing touch to his work by the erection of cathedral chapters. To these bodies were given the right of electing the bishop. The bishoprics, of which there were now nine in Scotland, were divided into rural deaneries. In the diocese of St Andrews there were eight deaneries ; in that of Glasgow there were nine ; Aberdeen had five ; Moray and Dunkeld had each four ; the other dioceses do not appear to have been divided into deaneries.

Magnificent cathedrals, mitred bishops, and lordly abbots, with their numerous following of canons, and friars, and nuns, are, or ought to be, but the means to an end. What was the end sought to be served by the creation of so powerful a staff of richly endowed ecclesiastics ? These fraternities have been summoned into existence to maintain the worship of God in Scotland, and instruct its people in divine truth. Nothing has been withheld from them which may help them to fulfil their end. For them rise gorgeous temples ; for them the earth ripens her harvests ; for them the people toil and sweat. In King David they have found a nursing father. We expect to see Scotland burst into a glory which shall far excell that of her early day. Her renown for piety will go forth among the nations of the earth, and the youth of distant lands will flock to her shores, as at a former day, to learn the wisdom of her schools. When we think of the great things that were accomplished by the little Iona, what may we not expect from this splendidly equipped church ? But alas ! one thing it lacks, and lacking this one thing, all the seeming advantages of this magnificent apparatus are to

no purpose. Iona conquered because it was instinct with a divine force. At the heart of the mighty organization which David has set up we find only earthly forces. The powers and grandeurs of the world can never overcome themselves. And hence the erection of this imposing ecclesiasticism forms the date not of a new era of light but of the beginning of the dark years of Scotland.

Yet this new church of David did, after a fashion, maintain Divine service in the country. The cathedrals were opened for worship, but to what purpose? The public services of that church within the pale of which the Scots had now been brought was everywhere conducted in Latin. That is the sacred tongue of Rome. If instead of Gaelic the Latin had been the mother tongue of the Scots, they might have joined in the services of the cathedral and been edified by them. As it was, their understandings could not be reached. The music of the litanies and chants might charm them, they might regale the eye with the rites and dresses of the clergy, but beyond this they could not worship. It is probable that the congregation, on these occasions, consisted of the priests and the Anglo-Norman immigrants, and that few or none of the Scotch peasantry took part in the service. "The Roman breviary and missal, or rather that modification of them, in use in the church of Sarum, was adopted almost universally."<sup>1</sup> The Roman Catholic historian just quoted might have traced the service in the Scottish Cathedrals, to a yet older and more classic model. The ritual of Rome is founded on that of heathendom. The Pope sings mass in the dress of the Roman Pontifex Maximus when offering sacrifices to Jove. Astarte has transferred her crown as Queen of Heaven to the head of Mary. The lighted candles are the modern form of the "Flame worship" so universal among the early nations. The "cross" was used for ages as a sacred symbol in the

<sup>1</sup> Bellersheim's *History of the Catholic Church of Scotland*, 2. 206.



worship of the Egyptians before it appeared on the ensigns of Christianity, and the statues, the flowers, the incense and the lustral water of the Roman churches did service in the Greek temples before finding their way into the "Christian Church."

At this epoch the Bible would seem to have disappeared from Scotland. We do not see it in the abbey; nor do we find the reading of it among the prescribed exercises of the monks; yet doubtless copies of it lingered in the land in Culdee cell, or in Culdee family, the work of some pious scribe of a former generation. The preaching of the gospel must have all but entirely ceased. Of the Culdee churches many were in ruins; others had been gifted to the abbeys, with the lands that appertained to them. It was the office of the friars to maintain service in the churches, but alas! the friars preached, if they preached at all, in Saxon or in French, while their hearers understood only in Gaelic. In the course of a century or so the friars may possibly have acquired the power of preaching in the language of the Scots, but before that time, it is reasonable to conclude, their gift was considerably rusted, if not altogether lost; and when at last their mouths were opened they found they had nothing to say, or nothing that was worth saying. We lose trace or record of public instruction from this time onward. We hear no Sabbath bell; we see no congregation of grave and devout worshippers on their way to the sanctuary. The convent bell rings, and duly as clock-work there is heard from abbey and monastery the song of mattins and vespers; but from glen and mountain side there comes no more the grand melody of the old psalms sung by assembled thousands in the rich and plaintive music of the Gael. These glories belonged to the past; the Sabbaths of the present how unspeakably sad!

At length the friars ventured into the pulpit, and essayed

to preach, but alas ! the sermons to which their hearers were doomed to listen. They are not easily characterised. We shall give a specimen, and leave the reader to judge for himself. The field of selection is limited, for only a few examples of the "Pulpit Eloquence" of the age have come down to us. The following illustrations are from a friendly source. We quote from the *Monasticon*. Davies says : "Every Sunday a sermon was preached in the galiley,<sup>1</sup> from one to three in the afternoon ; previous to which, at twelve, the great bell of the convent tolled three-quarters of an hour, and rung the fourth quarter till one o'clock that the people might have warning to come and hear the word of God. The friars also preached there, and there were sermons on saints' days and other solemnities. Some of these sermons were very strange and ridiculous, as the following extracts will show. 'A lark is a bird which sings a song proceeding from recollection of the benefits of God. For the lark, when she begins to mount, lightly sings *Deum*, *Deum*, *Deum* ; when she comes a little higher, she sings many times *Deum*, many times *Deum* ; when she comes highest of all she sings entirely *Deum*. Thus does the pious soul from gratitude.'

Among other specimens the compiler of the *Monasticon* gives the following of the preaching of the friars. "You have seen a man carrying a lighted candle in the open air, and guarding it with his two hands lest it should be blown out." This noways uncommon incident is thus spiritualised. "The monk's soul is the candle, his body the part illuminated ; the three winds liable to blow it out are the World, the Flesh, and the Devil ; the two hands that hold the light are Alms and Fasting." "A sermon to the nuns on flowers emitting odour," says the *Monasticon*, "like the lily, is a string

<sup>1</sup> A loft in the convent for the abbot's family to view processions.



of allegorical puns." Another in the manner of the "Abbey of the Holy Ghost" is as follows: "The first girl is Chastity, the second Humility, the third Mercy, and she is cellaress, which provides meat and drink; the fourth is Modesty, and she is mistress of the novices; the fifth is the Infirmaress, and she is patience; the sixth is Obedience." The following is a better example, and has a little flavour of the Bible about it. It is a climax, and runs thus: "And this is *great*, *greater*, *greatest*; *great*, to abjure and scorn the world; *greater*, to rejoice in tribulation; *greatest*, to pant sweetly after God."<sup>1</sup>

These selections show that the friars had a decided genius for metaphor and allegory; but the step between the rhetorical and the grotesque, like that which divides the sublime from the ridiculous, is a little one, and the friars not unfrequently overpassed it. Above all things, they had a horror of being dull, and sedulously cultivated the comic vein, being much better pleased that their hearers should laugh than that they should yawn. Moreover, the wide field of mythological fable and traditional legend lay open to them, and they industriously gleaned from that luxuriantly stocked region all that was most strange and wonderful for the amusement if not the instruction of those who gathered to hear them. Their happiest efforts only tickled the ear or amused the fancy, they never penetrated the bosom or touched the conscience.

Such was the instruction to which the Scots were now delivered up—the scenic exhibitions of the cathedral, and the hebdomadal buffoonery of the friars. There was nutriment here for neither the intellect nor the soul. Under such a regimen what may we expect the Scots to become? They can become nothing else than a withered, dwarfed,

<sup>1</sup> Gordon: *Monasticon*, i. 19, 20. Glasgow, 1868.



frivolous, shrivelled-up race, incapable henceforth of any lofty aspiration, or any noble achievement. Their destiny has been fatally changed. They will count for nothing in the future history of nations. To them knowledge will owe no new enlargements of her domain, nor will liberty have to thank them for new triumphs of heroism. So did it seem, and so would it have been, if other and counteracting influences had not come into play to preserve from extinction a race impregnate with rich and powerful idiosyncrasies. The troops of black-robed men who were swarming all over the land had not come from the monkeries and cells of foreign countries to assist at the burial of the Scottish nation, and sing dirge and requiem over its grave, although it looked at this moment as if this were the meaning of their portentous appearance. The Scots were not to close their career in the twelfth century, and be consigned to the catacombs of history, like the mummified monks in the Convent of the Cappuccini at Rome, and be shown in after ages as the relics of a nation which, having become the bondsman of the church, died with the collar of the abbey round its neck.

The Scots had themselves to blame for an inundation which submerged their past and threatened annihilation to their future. They saw the night coming, but they did not watch. Star after star disappeared from their sky, still they felt no alarm. They could not believe that the day was going away. And now there is darkness over all the land. There is a morning beyond, but at what a distance. Of those now living there is not one that shall see the breaking of the new day. In the tenth generation, but not before, must the Scots return from the captivity into which we now see them being carried. But first they must be purified, and the purification of nations must be accomplished in the fire. Their voluntary submission to

one yoke will be chastised, as it often is, by their enforced submission to another. To spiritual bondage will be added political slavery. Their faculties are at this hour too benumbed to feel the smart and shame of the first ; the second will gall them to the quick. They will go back to the battlefield to recover their manhood. Their war with the Dane was past, or almost so, that with Edward of England was yet to come. In these more terrible struggles the lethargic sleep into which the Scots have sunk will be effectually broken. Stirred again by the aspirations of patriotism, they will cast off their stupor, and advance with freshened energy to their second and greater battle, even that of breaking their spiritual chains and setting free the soul.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### DEATH OF DAVID—HIS CHARACTER.

THE latter days of King David were darkened by a great sorrow. His life till now had been singularly unclouded by misfortune. In most things he had a fair measure of success. His foreign policy displayed ability and tact: his internal administration was wise and upright, bating the tremendous error of his church policy—a considerable deduction however. His qualities as a hero procured him respect in the eyes of all the sovereigns of his time, and his devotion to his duties as a ruler, and his love of country, joined to a noble simplicity of character, and an unaffected frankness and accessibility, made him the idol of his people. Not in his own days only but even in ours, he remains a conspicuous figure in the long line of our royal personages. As the result of this combination of qualities, not the monarch only, but the country of Scotland stood out in bulkier proportions and bolder relief before the rest of Christendom than it had done for some centuries previous. To crown his satisfaction, David had the prospect, when his days should be fulfilled, of transmitting the sceptre of a kingdom, which, now placed on a settled basis, gave promise of flourishing, to his only son Henry, Prince of Northumberland.

Prince Henry had already given proof of his capacity to govern, and his virtues had endeared him to his father, and not less to the nation, who rejoiced to think that when King David should go hence his throne would be filled by a prince



so worthy to succeed him. But this bright prospect was suddenly overcast by an unexpected stroke that befell the royal house. Prince Henry, the heir of all this power, sickened and died (1142), and the bitter task of the father was to lay in the grave, in the prime of life, that son who had ever stood before his imagination as wearing his crown and swaying his sceptre when he himself should be resting in the tomb.

With Prince Henry the joy of David's heart and the happiness of his life departed. Age had already dimmed his eye when this shadow fell to deepen the gloom and sadness which years often bring with them. From this moment the landscape was less fair to one who had always found in the aspects of nature one main source of enjoyment, and who had often turned from the cares of his kingdom to find relaxation in the cultivation of his flowers and the engrafting of his fruit trees. His life, too, came within the shadow of this eclipse, as well what of it was past as the much briefer space that lay before him. Where the father had sowed in toil and anxiety, the son, coming after him, was to reap in peace, so David confidently expected. But the prince who should have been the inheritor of the fruits of all these labours had gone to the grave, and his removal had written "vanity and vexation" upon all the endeavours and achievements of David. The blow was all the heavier to both king and people from the circumstance that the three sons of the deceased prince were of tender age, and it was impossible not to forecast that much of what the wise and patriotic monarch had won for Scotland would be put in peril, and it might be wholly lost, by the weakness and the inexperience, or by the blunders or the crimes of a young reign. Such were the heavy clouds that obscured the evening of a day which during its currency had enjoyed a

larger amount of sunshine than was the average experience of the monarchs of that time.

David, feeling that his end was not now distant, began to prepare for his departure by setting his kingdom in order. It was now that he was able to estimate the full extent of the loss he had sustained in the death of his son Henry. Summoning his three grandchildren into his presence, he declared the eldest, Malcolm, the undoubted heir of the throne. To William, the second, he assigned the principality of Northumberland, and to David, the youngest, he bequeathed the Earldom of Huntingdon, his family inheritance. He charged the nobility to give effect to the royal will touching the succession, and, in particular, he recommended Malcolm to the care of Macduff, Earl of Fife, the man of greatest influence among the Scottish nobles. Taking with him the young prince, Macduff made the circuit of the kingdom, and showed Malcolm to the nation as their future sovereign.<sup>1</sup> It was some consolation to the aged monarch, whose heart was still bleeding from his recent grief, to know who would sit upon his throne after him, and that he had prepared the way for his undisputed succession.

These arrangements concluded, David was left free to engage in more solemn preparations for his departure from earth. He had often contended on the battle field, but now he was to engage in conflict with an enemy against whom a coat of mail and a sword of steel could afford him no defence. He must arm himself with quite different weapons. He multiplied his acts of devotion, and spent his days and nights in prayer. He was now residing in Carlisle. He had been partial to this city all life long; and now, in the evening of his day, he came thither, that here his eyes might close for the last time on all earthly scenes.

<sup>1</sup> Buchanan, *Hist. Scot.*, lib. vii., c. 36.



The environments of this city, more akin to the landscapes with which he had been familiar in his youth than the rugged if grander aspects of his more northern dominions; the meadows spread around its walls; the soft flowing Dee, that waters them, and the genial breezes from the western ocean must have had a soothing influence on both mind and body of one who to the burden of state, which he had long borne, had now superadded the burden of old age. When the priests saw that his last day was near they offered to have the sacrament brought to him in his chamber. The King would in nowise suffer it so to be; on the contrary, he made himself be carried to the church and received the sacrament at the altar. Expressing a wish to enter that Kingdom where all the inhabitants are kings, he clasped his hands as in prayer, and breathed his last. King David died on the 24th of May 1153, having reigned twenty-nine years, two months, and three days. The royal remains were carried to Dunfermline, and there interred with becoming pomp and splendour.

The character of David it is not easy to paint. To delineate the various qualities of which it was made up, to pronounce judgment upon them one by one, to be laudatory here, and critical or condemnatory there, were easy enough; but to balance nicely and accurately, and from numerous diverse qualities to educe a unity, and from conflicting and discordant passions and aims to extricate and establish the one predominating characteristic which differentiates the man from all others, and make the one accomplished result of his life stand out from lesser issues is not so easy. It is neither the dissecting power of analysis, nor the constructive art of synthesis that can enable us to do this; it is only the slow revealing light of Time that can aid us here. Had we stood by the grave of King David when his dust was being



lowered into it, we would have found nothing but panegyric to pronounce over him. We would have spoken of him, as doubtless those who stood around his tomb spoke of him, as the patriotic King, the lover of his people, the accomplished knight and warrior, the upright and wise administrator, and, it may be, the reformer of religion. But the hour of death, or the day of burial, when virtues only are remembered and faults are forgotten, is not the time to weigh calmly and dispassionately the characters of men who have occupied public, and especially royal station; nor is it the time to forecast the issues to spring from their lives. A good character is like a good tree, it bringeth forth good fruit: but we must wait till the fruit has been ripened, and then we may pronounce upon its quality. If the fruit is acrid, or if it is poisonous we may be sure, however luxuriant the foliage and lovely the blossom, that there is somewhere in the tree a principle of evil. Buchanan, no worshipper of kings, or flatterer of princes, has taxed the powers of his pen to the uttermost to paint in brilliant colours the character of David. "Although his whole life," says the historian, "was exemplary beyond anything which history records; yet for a few years before his death, he devoted himself so entirely to preparations for another and a better world, that he greatly increased the veneration which his earlier years had inspired. As he equalled the most excellent of the former kings in his warlike achievements, and excelled them in his cultivation of the arts of peace, at last, as if he had ceased to contend with others for pre-eminence in virtue he endeavoured to rival himself, and in this he so succeeded, that the utmost ingenuity of the most learned who should attempt to delineate the resemblance of a good king, would not be able to conceive one so excellent as David during his whole life evinced himself."<sup>1</sup> This is just what we would have expected Buchanan

<sup>1</sup> Buchanan, *Hist. Scot.*, lib. vii. c. 36.

to say, had he said it when David was but newly dead ; but the wonder is that this eulogium was written when the king had been four hundred years in the grave, and when the true character of David's policy had proclaimed itself in the ruin of the letters, of the arts, and of the religion of his native land ! Had the historian come to love a system which dragged martyrs to the stake, and chased himself into exile when he penned this panegyric on the prince who of all who ever reigned in Scotland had distinguished himself by his zeal to have that system set up in the land ? Or did the historian's insight and sound judgment forsake him in this instance, and failing to distinguish a wise from a destructive policy, did he award praise where he ought to have pronounced censure, if not condemnation ? We can excuse him only by saying that in viewing the character of David he adopted a wrong stand-point. He looked at the virtues which diffused happiness within the narrow circle of his court, and during the brief span of his lifetime only, and abstracted his view from the evils of his policy which spread desolation over the wider area of his realm, and prolonged their pernicious action for the space of four centuries. Seen from the one point of view King David's character reveals itself in brilliance, seen from the other it recedes into blackness. The historian, however, is responsible for the stand-point he adopts ; it is one of the main elements of justice and truth.

In politics, as in religion, we must walk by "faith" and not by "sight." Vices which are "seen" are by that very circumstance deprived of half their evil. It is the vices that are *not seen*, or that present themselves in the guise of virtues that accomplish the greatest mischief. Nations have been destroyed, and the world's happiness has been blighted, not so much by *vicious characters* as by *false principles*. All history is full of examples of this truth, some of them, on a



colossal scale. Monsters like Nero and Caligula have not been the greatest scourges of mankind. The abhorrence awakened by their wickedness has set bounds to its destructive influence. Their crimes are reprobated rather than imitated. Not so the inventors or propagators of a false principle. It is they who have been the greatest desolators of the world. Such principle once enthroned in the world's belief, before it can be overthrown must first demonstrate its own falsity ; ages may be necessary to enable it to do this ; meanwhile, it is dominating mankind, and working its slow but terrible ruin in silence.

As a man David must be judged by his personal accomplishments and qualities ; as a king—and it is as a king that the Scots have to do with him—he must be tried by the aim and scope of his policy. There can be no difficulty in applying that standard, and measuring thereby the obligations which posterity owes to his labours, and the reverence in which it ought to hold his memory. If his policy was enlightened and beneficent we shall have only to look around and witness the monument of it in a great and prosperous country ; but if evil we shall in like manner read the tokens of it in a land weighed down under a load of woes. What say the four centuries that come after David ? They rise up in the judgment against him. This is a witness that cannot lie. We are confronted with an array of facts which it is dismal to recall or to recite ; the children of the soil sold to strangers, the acres of the country parted among proud Normans and greedy priests, the churches of the Culdees in ruins ; the reverent services of the sanctuary converted into pantomime, the flocks fed with ribald jests and silly tales ; all the springs of the nation's well-being dried up, and above the ruin which Scotland comes in a few centuries to present sits enthroned a great red Moloch which demands to be worshipped with sacrifices of blood.



It has been pleaded in David's behalf that he was educated in England, that the native church of his country, the Columban, had grievously degenerated, and that he was sincere in the change he introduced in the religion of his kingdom. But all this goes a very little way to excuse him, as most assuredly it had not the slightest effect in mitigating the evils to which his policy gave birth. Sincerity to be of any value must be founded on rational conviction, and rational conviction, David had none. He came from England with the foregone conclusion that the Romish was the better religion, and must be set up in Scotland. David had evidence within his reach which would have enabled him to arrive at a sound conclusion on this point had he chosen to avail himself of it. He knew that this new form of worship was distasteful to the great body of the Scots ; he knew that for centuries they had resisted its introduction and withstood conversion to it ; he knew that former kings who had essayed on a small scale what he was now purposing to do on a large, had had to employ intrigue and violence ; he knew that the scheme he contemplated would cross the most venerated traditions of the Scots, and desecrate their most cherished memories, and dry up the deepest springs of their power. As one who was to reign over a people who had once been enlightened and great, and had left their record as such in the history of nations, he was bound to have weighed all these considerations. He could not forecast the future and foresee all the ruin that was to follow his policy ; but the past was open to his scrutiny, he was bound to hear what it had to say, and had he listened to it it would have warned him to shun the path on which he was now entering, as one that might lead to the fall of his house, and would most surely entail calamity upon the nation.

This, at least, David might have known, that, in his eccle-

siastical polity, he reversed all the maxims of equity and honour which had guided him in his civil administration. He had fought for the ancient honour of Scotland against the mail-clad warriors of England, but he weakly betrayed it to the men in frocks and cowls from abroad. He had combatted for his English principalities and earldoms; not a footbreadth of territory would he surrender to Stephen, but he ruthlessly stript the Culdees of lands and heritages which they held by tenures more ancient and more sacred than his own, and therewith he enriched foreign priors and abbots. He adjudicated with scrupulous fairness betwixt man and man, but he did not hold the scales of justice equally even betwixt the ancient Scottish church and the new intruder, the Roman. This was not the part either of a good knight or of a patriotic king. Nor must the fact be overlooked, for we see in it retribution, and we learn from it instruction, that the same man who drew upon Scotland this inundation of English clerics, drew upon it the inundation of English armies. It is to King David that the Scots owe their wars with the English. His ill-advised attempt to place his neice Maud on the throne of England, and to restore the Anglo-Saxon family to the government of that realm, awakened the resentment of Stephen, and provoked those aggressions upon the independence of Scotland, which, continuing under the two Edwards, resulted in two centuries of humiliation and calamities to the Scottish nation. It was a farther evil consequence of David's policy that it broke the unity of the nation so that Scotland could no longer bring its whole heart into the struggle, as it had done in its conflict with the Dane. Every Norman monk whom David had planted in the kingdom, in his heart wished success to the English arms. It was the interest of these foreign ecclesiastics that there should be but one kingdom, and that it should be



under the Norman sceptre, and so an effectual guarantee obtained that the old Culdeeism should never more lift up its head, or dispute possession of the country with the new churches which David had planted in the land. All this was well known to the English monarchs, and hence the persistency of their attempts to crush the independence of the northern kingdom. If the consciousness of this emboldened the English sovereigns, it in an equal degree dispirited the Scots. The treachery to country which crept in with the foreign friars spread like a poison through the nation, and did its work in paralyzing the heart of Scottish patriotism and enfeebling the arm of Scottish valour. In the great conflict that soon thereafter opened, noble after noble gave way, battle after battle was lost, and England was on the very point of triumphing, not over Scotland only, but over herself as well. The same blow that would have struck down Scotland would have struck off one of the main arms of England's strength, and sorely crippled her in the conflicts that lay before her. A staunch ally would in the future have been missing from her side in many a battle by sea and by land; and what would have been more to be deplored, England, in her greater enterprise of subjugating the world by the arts of peace would have been without her most zealous and efficient fellow-labourer. It had almost come to be so. The policy of David had inflicted a deadly blight on Scottish patriotism, and it lay benumbed for two centuries. During the currency of these dreary years the throne was filled by weak sovereigns, and the English were busy plotting to put chains upon the limbs of the Scottish nation. The patriotic spirit that slumbered but was not dead awoke amid the carnage of the battle-fields of Wallace and of Bruce. The great struggle for liberty, political and spiritual, which Bannockburn inaugurated, was prolonged



for two hundred years. To chronicle the triumphs and defeats which marked the course of that momentous struggle ; to paint the shining virtues of the patriot, the heroic deeds of the warrior, and the sublime triumphs of the martyr which shed upon it so resplendent a lustre ; to describe the combat lighted up this hour with the glory of magnanimity and self-devotion, and darkened the next by the blackness of perfidy and cowardice ; to exhibit the alternate hopes and fears which agitated the bosoms of the combatants, and above all portray the great principles which underlay the conflict, and which expanded the intellect and sustained the soul of those who were engaged in it, and impelled them to fight on till their great task was accomplished, and Scotland stood erect in a perfect liberty, prepared to take her place by the side of her sister of England as her meet yoke-fellow in the sublime mission of extending to the nations of the world, that liberty which they had vindicated for themselves, will be our business in the subsequent volumes of this history.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

A.D. 1153—1286.

REIGNS OF MALCOLM IV.—WILLIAM THE LION—  
ALEXANDER III.—BATTLE OF LARGS.

HAVING set up the Church of Rome in Scotland, David I. went to his grave, leaving that Church to do her work in the downfall of his house and the partial ruin of the country. The first of these issues came sooner than David could perhaps have anticipated. The career of the Anglo-Celtic family that now governed Scotland was drawing to its close. It opened with the arrival of Margaret of England in 1068, and it ended when Alexander III., falling over the cliffs a little eastward of the spot where Margaret had first set foot on the Scottish earth, ended his life and reign. A short narrative will suffice to close the history of this branch of the royal house.

David I. was succeeded by his grandson Malcolm IV. (1153), a youth of twelve years. His education was such as to fit him for the cowl rather than the throne. He is better known as Malcolm the *Maiden*, a name which he owed to his girlish features and effeminate disposition. In all the qualities which were most needed for his position and his age he was signally lacking, and hardly had he begun his reign till the shadows of calamity were seen to gather. Scotland was suffering from a cruel famine which presented day by day an augmented death-roll. On the western border of the

kingdom, Summerled, the powerful Thane of Argyll, had raised the standard of rebellion, and his adherents were being recruited from the discontented and the profligate. The country, so tranquil under the former sceptre, and which David was believed to have established on firm foundations, became in a brief space convulsed by factions, and perplexed by the fear of still greater evils which seemed impending.

The quarter whence the young King had most to dread was England. The throne of that country was filled by an astute, resolute, and most ambitious man, Henry II., whose name is unpleasantly associated with the assassination of Thomas à Becket, and the subjection of Ireland to the Papacy. Henry II. was the son of the Empress Maud, and the cousin of Malcolm IV. now on the throne of Scotland, but the ties of relationship and even the obligation of treaties were of small account in Henry's estimation when they stood in the way of his ambition. When kneeling before David at Carlisle to receive the honour of knighthood at his hand, Henry swore that he would never disturb the Scottish King nor his posterity in the possession of their English principalities. David was now in his grave, his throne was filled by a youth of tender years and of shallow parts, and the unscrupulous Henry, forgetful of his oath, and bent on aggrandisement, demanded of Malcolm the surrender of his estates in England. Henry would have enforced his demand with the sword, but even he felt that the proceeding would be too scandalous and unjust to be openly attempted, and he resolved to employ the hidden arts of policy, of which he was an adept, to gain his purpose. He requested the Scotch King to meet him at Chester, and confer with him about the affair. Malcolm weakly complied. The result, as might have been foreseen, was that the raw youth was cajoled by his astute cousin into doing homage for his English princi-



palities. Nor was this the end of the affair. His own disgrace and the nation's humiliation were made complete by his being soon thereafter despoiled of the principalities of Cumbria and Northumberland. The indignation of the Scots was so great that Malcolm IV. had nearly lost his throne into the bargain, and the latter years of his life passed amid insurrections and troubles.

Young as Malcolm was, and short as was the period during which he occupied the throne, he gave abundant proof that with the blood of his great grandmother Margaret he inherited her profound devotion to the Roman Church. During his reign monasteries and convents rose all over the land. After the numerous foundations of the previous reign one wonders what need there could be for more religious houses. Considering its population, Scotland was already overstocked with such institutions. But Malcolm thought that it never could have enough of convents and monks. Scotland henceforth was to do her religion by proxy. An army of cowed foreigners were to chant litanies and recite paternosters while her own sons were to plough and dig and sweat: an admirable division of labour whereby the country was enabled to be at once a model of industry and a model of religion. One-half its population are told off to ply the spade and the plough, and the other half are set apart to count beads and sing aves. It will not be the fault of Margaret's descendants if Scotland, in centuries to come, be not the Levitical country of Europe! At every short distance the towers of abbey or monastery met the eye, and the convent chimes saluted the ear. The new houses with which Malcolm the Maiden swelled the list of David's foundations were Cupar in Angus and Manuel of Linlithgow, both Cistercian establishments. At Saltre, on the confines of Lothian, was an hospital for "pilgrims, travellers, and poor

folk," with the privilege of "sanctuary," and marked, as all such refuges of vagabonds were, with chain and cross. The nobles who wished to stand well at court followed the example of the King, knowing what pleasure it would give the "Maiden," who was not just a paragon of the virtue which the name imports, to see such edifices rising to sanctify his realm. Cistercian convents were founded at Eccles and Coldstream by Gospatrick, Earl of March; at St Bathans by Ada, Countess of Dunbar; at Haddington by Ada, Countess of Huntingdon, mother to the King; at Edinburgh, in St Mary's Wynd; and a Cistercian abbey at Cantyre, founded by Reginald, son to Somerled, Lord of the Isles, who rose in rebellion against Malcolm, but fell in battle. The principal religious house founded in that reign was the Abbey of Paisley. Its foundations were laid in the year 1164 by Walter Fitz-Allan, High Steward of Scotland, and ancestor of the Royal House of Stuart. The abbey, which was richly endowed with lands, and rose to be one of the chief religious establishments in Scotland, was colonised by a body of Benedictine monks whose original house was at Cluniac in France, hence termed Clunienses. Malcolm IV. died in 1165, having reigned twelve years.

He was succeeded by his brother William. He is known as William the Lion, not because of any outstanding magnanimity of soul, or any lion-like feat of valour performed by him, but because he had the humbler distinction of being the first to blazon on the national standard of Scotland the "lion-rampant," in room of the "dragon" which from time immemorial had held this place of honour. Under William it was found impossible to stop, much less turn back, the adverse tide which had set in in the affairs of Scotland. The tendency was still downward. It was natural that William should think of recovering the lands in England which Mal-



colm had so softly let go, but the attempt only landed the nation in greater losses and deeper disgrace.

William invaded England, and renewed on the wretched borderland the oft repeated tragedy of sack and burning and slaughter. His army lay before Alnwick, a town of ominous interest to the Scots, since Malcolm Canmore had met his fate beneath its walls. The King of England was at that time fighting in France, but the barons of the north, roused by the devastations of the Scots, met at York to confer about the steps to be taken for the defence of the country. Though only four hundred in number, and sheathed in heavy mail, they resolved on a night ride to Alnwick. Starting from Newcastle they arrived in the neighbourhood of Alnwick at daybreak. The morning rose in a thick mist, and the adventurous knights, fearing lest they should ride unawares into the heart of the Scottish camp, resolved to halt. Suddenly the mist lifted, and disclosed to their view a small party of horsemen tilting in a meadow beneath them. The English horsemen rushed upon the little party, and seizing the knight who made himself the more conspicuous by his resistance, bore him off into England. We may conceive the surprise of the English barons when they discovered that their captive was no less a personage than William the Lion, King of Scotland. The Church chroniclers say that this piece of good fortune happened to the King of England on the very day that he underwent his famous penance at the shrine of Thomas à Becket. One regrets that a legend that reads so beautifully should be rudely dispelled by the fact that the King of England was at the time in France.

The barons carried their royal captive across to Falaise in Normandy, and delivered him up to their master. Henry was overjoyed, believing that in capturing a king he had



captured a kingdom. At all events, he was resolved that Malcolm should pay a kingdom for his ransom. The deed in which Malcolm of Scotland was to own Henry of England as his liege lord, and the Scottish people the subjects of the English crown, was carefully and skilfully drawn. Henry took care that in the document there should not be flaw or loophole through which the splendid prize which he had so long and ardently coveted, and so often schemed to appropriate, and which a fortunate accident had thrown into his hands when he looked not for it, might escape from his grasp. Every formality, phrase, promise, and oath known to the feudal age, and employed to give binding force to its covenants, was present in this deed. William accepted the bond, and swore fealty as his liege-man to the King of England. Nor he alone; his bishops and nobles were partners with him in this surrender of the ancient independence of their country, and the transaction was concluded, and Henry's hold upon Scotland made complete by the delivery into his hands of the castles of Edinburgh, Stirling, Berwick, Roxburgh, and Jedburgh, which were now garrisoned with his troops. This transaction took place on 10th August 1175.

There is no darker day in the annals of Scotland. The independence of Scotland had often been in extreme peril, but never had it been wholly lost. It had come intact and triumphant through numberless intestine rebellions, and through many foreign invasions; but now a nationality which had vindicated its claim to be independent on so many battlefields, and in the face of superior numbers, passed into vassalage without a blow being struck. William the Lion gave Scotland for his liberty. This was a heavy price to pay for one man, even though that man was a king. It was wont to be said in old time, "Tis sweet to die for one's country."

William the Lion was not of this opinion. His patriotism eschewed all such romantic and dangerous ideas. His creed was a much safer one, even that it is becoming that the kingdom should die for its king. Death for country was a luxury for which he felt no ambition. His blood was too precious to be spilt for such a cause. What good could a living country do a dead king? It would not open the doors of his sepulchre and enable him to exchange the shroud for the royal mantle, or the silence of the grave for the voices of his courtiers; and seeing it could not do this, William judged that it were better that his country should die by surrendering its independence, and that himself should live. But what of the "Lion" which he had blazoned on the national standard? Did he now efface that symbol of courage and freedom from the Scottish flag, seeing it was no longer banner meet to be seen in the hand of a vassal nation? We do not read that he did. There was a two-fold disgrace in the humiliation which William, who was no Lion, put on Scotland. The king at whose feet he laid its independence had himself held the stirrup of his haughty prelate when he mounted his mule;<sup>1</sup> and in no long time thereafter Henry stooped lower still, he offered his bare back to be scourged by the monks at the tomb of that same prelate, Thomas à Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury. So haughty had the Church become, and so low had she sunk monarchs. By her supposed supernatural powers she was able to strike the princes of the age with terror, and turn them into cravens.

The political independence of Scotland had been surrendered: now came a demand on its ecclesiastical independence. This shows that the entire subjugation of the country and its annexation as an integral part of England had been resolved upon. The Church of England (1176) required of the

<sup>1</sup> Hume, *History of England*, vol. i., chap. viii., p. 144. Lond., 1826.



Scottish bishops submission to her jurisdiction. For this, however, the Scottish prelates were not prepared. They had sworn political fealty to Henry; they resisted the spiritual claims now made upon them by the metropolitans of Canterbury and York. The case was appealed to Rome, and the reigning Pope, Alexander III., gave judgment in favour of the Scotch bishops. Nevertheless, the judgment formed a pretext for the coming of a legate into the kingdom, a functionary whose appearance has never boded good to Scotland, nor to any country. Freedom dies around his footsteps, as did the grass under the hoofs of the Caliph's horse.

It was about this time that William the Lion laid the foundations of an abbey destined to become one of the richest and grandest in all Scotland, and which, linking its history with the powerful and bloody house of Beaton, and through that house with some of the martyr scenes of the Reformation, has gathered round it a cloud of tragic memories—Aberbrothock. Where now its grandeur? No longer does abbot ride forth at its gate on his richly caparisoned mule; no longer does troop of friars sweep past with banners and chants; or vespers come floating out on the evening air; the vast pile reared by William has yielded to time, leaving to our day its majestic ruins to bespeak its former magnificence and extent.

William had not yet completed the rearing of this mighty temple for the Roman worship, which he dedicated to Thomas à Becket, when he found himself at war with the head of the Roman Church. The quarrel grew out of a miserable dispute betwixt Robert of St Andrews and John of Aberdeen, the question being which of the two should fill the See of St Andrews. This case too was appealed to Rome, and the Scottish King and the Pontiff took opposite sides. The merits of the quarrel have not the slightest interest for any one at



this day except the advocates of apostolic succession, and we notice it only because of the infliction it drew down on Scotland. To chastise William for presuming to have a mind of his own in the matter, and not yielding instant compliance with the papal wish, the kingdom was smitten with excommunication. Of all the weapons in Rome's armoury the most terrible perhaps was interdict. It was accompanied by such visible signs and tokens of Divine wrath that the stoutest heart quailed, and fear was on all faces, from the monarch downwards. Terror overspread the land. The vengeance thundered from the Seven Hills was believed to be the vengeance of the Almighty. All the channels of grace were stopped, and all the symbols of salvation withdrawn. The priests forsook the temples; the lights at the altar were extinguished; the church doors were closed; the bells hung silent in the steeples; the voice of bride and of bridegroom ceased; infants could not be baptised, nor could the dead be buried except in ditches, and over them neither dirge nor requiem could be sung. This awful doom projected its shadow into the world beyond, for the gates of Paradise were closed, and crowds of disembodied spirits wandered disconsolate on the gloomy banks of the Styx, waiting till the interdict should be lifted off, and the closed gates be again opened. To kings the interdict was specially formidable. Apart from its ghostly terrors it had for them grave political consequences. This fiery missile thrown into the midst of their populations not infrequently kindled insurrection and rebellion in their kingdoms, resulting in the destruction of order and the fall of the throne. We at this day smile at these stage terrors, the men of that day trembled and made haste to make their peace with the Pontiff. It so happened that Pope Alexander III. died at this juncture, and his successor Lucius III. being a more placable man, and,

moreover, not personally concerned in the quarrel, Scotland had riddance from this torment.

Death, too, befriended the country in the matter of its political vassalage. After fifteen years Henry II. of England departed this life, and left his throne to Richard Cœur de Lion. This monarch was enflamed with the passion of fighting the Saracens and winning glory on the fields of Palestine. But he sorely wanted money to enable him to join the crusades into which the Pope was drawing the princes of the age, to the weakening of their power and the aggrandisement of his own importance. An hundred thousand pounds would be of more service to the "Lion heart" in this strait than the feudal homage of Scotland, and being withal of a romantic and chivalrous turn he offered to relieve the Scottish King and kingdom from their oath of fealty (December 5, 1189) for this sum. The bargain was struck ; Scotland had back its independence, the castles held in pledge by England were given up to the Scots, and Richard the Lion-hearted set off to win an eternal name as the conqueror of infidels and the liberator of the "Holy Sepulchre." Scotland was again free. But it owed no thanks to its monarch. It might have been in bonds till this day if its emancipation had depended on the spirit, or policy, or sword of William the Lion.

Nothing more delighted the posterity of Queen Margaret than to see the Church multiplying her priests, and adding to the number of her acres. David, one would think, had provided sufficiently for her in both respects, considering the size and population of Scotland. But all the kings of his house seemed to have it for their ambition to increase the religious foundations and multiply the monkish orders. In William's reign the "Red Friars" were settled at Aberdeen, the Cluniacs at Lindores, the Cistercians at Glenluce and Inchaffray ; a house of canons-regular in Strathearn. In this reign



Iona again emerges into view. Ronald, Lord of the Isles, in 1203, rebuilt this famous monastery on a larger scale, and colonised it with Benedictines. The Culdees had lingered on the spot down till this time. Part of them would doubtless amalgamate with the Benedictine community and the others would die out.<sup>1</sup>

William's reign was memorable, moreover, on another account. The ecclesiastical independence of Scotland was now definitely vindicated. This matter had been in debate for more than a century. If the Kings of England coveted the temporal lordship of Scotland, the Church of England was ambitious of being its spiritual superior. Now it was York and now it was Canterbury that intrigued to introduce the thin edge of their supremacy by claiming a right to consecrate the bishops of St Andrews in token that all the Scottish Sees were subject to their jurisdiction, and that the whole Scottish realm was included in their diocese. William saw that the most effectual way of extinguishing the lesser supremacy was to oppose to it a greater. He laid his church at the feet of a higher master than either York or Canterbury, the Roman pontiff namely. He sent a deputation to Rome with the view of obtaining from the Pope a formal declaration that the Scottish Church owed direct and immediate allegiance to the Roman See and to none other. The deputation was successful, and on March 11, 1188, Clement III. issued a bull, in which he affectionately called the Scottish Church his "daughter," and took this youngest born of his family under the protection of his pontifical shield.<sup>2</sup> To this decision the English prelates were

<sup>1</sup> So says *Silgrave's Catalogue*, as given in Hadden and Stub's *Councils*, ii. 181.

<sup>2</sup> Papal bulls are named from their commencing words. This is known as the bull *Cum universi*. It runs thus :—*Presentia scripti pagina duximus statuendum, ut Scotticana Ecclesia Apostolicæ Sedi, cujus filia specialis exstitit, nullo mediante subiaceat.* *Hoveden Chron.*, ii. 390, 361.



compelled to bow, and the pretensions of York and Canterbury over the Church in Scotland came to an end. William died in 1214 at the age of seventy-four, having reigned forty-nine years.

He was succeeded by his son, Alexander II., at the age of sixteen. In England, too, the scenes had shifted. *Cœur de Lion* was dead, and John was on the throne. It was under this pusillanimous prince that Nemesis overtook England for its treatment of Scotland during the reign of William. England had robbed Scotland of its independence, and now we see England stript of her own independence. Scotland had passed out of vassalage, England passes into it. John laid his crown and kingdom at the foot of the Papal chair, swearing to be the liegeman of Innocent III., and engaging for himself and his successors to hold the kingdom as the vassals of the Pope. This was bondage more humiliating than any into which Scotland had ever been reduced, seeing it gave to the English people a priest as their master. This transaction brought after it civil war in England, and the nobles of that land, fleeing to the Scottish court from the tyranny of John, drew Alexander II. into the quarrel. He had escape from this embroglio in no long time, but not to find rest. Uprisings began to distract his own kingdom, and there came no day to Alexander without its care. His reign, which lasted from 1114 to 1149, was from beginning to end full of perplexity and toil. But no country in that age fared better, and some there were that fared even worse. It was the epoch of the great pontiff Innocent III. The sky of the papacy was without a cloud. Around the throne of the Pope all seemed stable; but the earth of political society was reeling to and fro, and the hearts of men were failing them from fear of impending change and dissolution.

There is no Scottish reign, not even David's, more

thoroughly *ecclesiastical* in its spirit and policy than that of Alexander II. The Church is seen becoming every day more and more the one institution which kings and nobles vie with each other to enrich with wealth. New abbeys and religious houses are rising in various parts of the country, and new orders of novel habit and unfamiliar name are arriving in Scotland to swell its already overgrown army of monks. Now was founded the Cistercian abbey of Culross, as also the Cistercian monastery of Balmerino. There were now erected three houses of the Order of Vallis Caulium, Pluscardin in Moray, Beaulieu near Inverness, and Ardechattan in Lorn. The Cluniac Benedictines were established at Crossraguel in Carrick, the Premonstratensians at Ferne in Ross, and the Trinitarians, or Red Friars, at Dunbar. The Begging Friars, recently founded by St Francis Assisi, speedily found their way into Scotland, and took up their abode at Roxburgh and Berwick. The King's special favourites among the men who wore frock and cowl is said to have been the Dominicans, whom he established at Inverness, Elgin, Aberdeen, Montrose, Perth, Stirling, Ayr, and Berwick. Their founder was St Dominic, to whom with Innocent III. the world is indebted for the "Holy Office." During Alexander's reign numerous diocesan synods and provincial councils were held, and some important canons enacted which throw light on the condition of Scotland in that age, but which will come better under our notice at a subsequent stage. In 1122 Adam, Bishop of Caithness, lost his life in a quarrel with his parishioners about his tithes. The King took a terrible vengeance for his murder by hanging four hundred of the inhabitants.<sup>1</sup> An insurrection in the Hebrides called Alexander suddenly to the Western Isles. When just on the point of succeeding in his expedition he

<sup>1</sup> Belesheim, *Catholic Church of Scotland*, i. 359.

sickened of fever, and died (July 8, 1249) on the Island of Kerrara. He was buried in the Abbey of Melrose, and his son, a child of eight years, succeeded him on the throne.

The boy was carried to Scone, enthroned on the stone of destiny, and with pomps all the more numerous and imposing, in respect his years were few, he was first knighted and next crowned as Alexander III. There is no other recorded coronation at Scone so brilliant as this, as if the Scots sought relief in these showy ceremonials from the fears with which the infant years of the King oppressed them. The little monarch sat in robe, and crown, and sceptre while the nobles of Scotland came forward one after another and swore fealty to him. Last of all stood forth from the assemblage a tall, venerable-looking highland bard.<sup>1</sup> On bended knee, his white hair falling on his shoulders, and his silver beard streaming down his breast, he recited with stentorian voice the genealogy of Alexander from the first Scottish monarch downwards. It was meet that all these formalities should be observed in this case. They were crowning the last heir of the house of Fergus, though they knew it not.

The auguries that dashed the splendours amid which the reign of our last Celtic king opened soon began to be realized. The feudal nobles of Scotland were so many kings, their vast territories so many kingdoms, and their numerous retainers so many armies, and as soon as the ceremony had

<sup>1</sup> John Major has described the magnificence of Alexander's coronation. "Rex ergo Alexander licet puellus, in solis cathedrali lapideo vestibus preciosis cooperto sedens, ab archiepiscopo Sancti Andreæ inunctus est. Et ecce quidam Scotus montanus, quem sylvestrem vocant venerandæ canitie in procerum præsentia novum regem Alexandrum sua lingua vernacula salutatur his verbis; Benach de Re Albin Alexander, mak Alexander, mak William, mak Henri, mak David," and so on up to "filii Fergusii primi Scotorum regis in Albania," and higher still to the first Scot who had come from Spain.—*Hist.* p. 153. Edinburgh, 1740.



ended they went forth from the coronation chamber at Scone to strive with one another for possession of the King, and with the royal person the government of the realm. The much coveted prize was borne off by Comyn, the powerful Earl of Menteith. There came halycon times for the house of Comyn and their friends, but it fared ill with their rivals, and worst of all with the country. The peasants were withdrawn from the plough to fight the battles of faction, the untilled fields refused their harvests, and famine came to aggravate the miseries of war. The disappointed nobles schemed how they might counterwork the influence of the Comyns, and set free the King from their control. They resolved to marry their young sovereign to the daughter of Henry III. of England, and give the King, as guardian and counsellor, the English monarch. The match was arranged, although Alexander was then only a lad of ten. If Scotland was now guarded on the side of the Comyn faction, new dangers were created in another quarter ; for the counsels which King Henry might tender to his son-in-law might not always be for the interests and honour of Scotland. As Alexander grew to manhood, however, he developed a hardy spirit and a sound penetration, which enabled him to hold his own in the game betwixt himself and the King of England. The two Courts met at York in 1251, to keep their Christmas and celebrate the marriage. Mathew Paris has left us a description of the festivities, the tournaments, the magnificent dresses, and, in particular, the jewelled robes of the Queen Dowager of Scotland, in which she outshone the ladies of both Courts. On the day after Christmas Alexander was married to Margaret, daughter of Henry III. of England. On this occasion the Scottish King is said to have paid homage for his English principalities ; but Henry, in the youth of Alexander, asked him to do

fealty for Scotland also, whereupon the plucky young monarch replied that he had come to York to receive his bride, not to surrender his kingdom.

Alexander III. inherited the weakness of all who had the blood of Margaret in their veins. With his reign came more abbeys and more friars.<sup>1</sup> Of the new foundations—for it were wearisome to chronicle all—we select only one, on account of the touching and romantic incident which led to its erection. It is the Cistercian Abbey of Sweetheart, near Dumfries, founded by Devorgoil, wife of John Baliol. When her husband died in 1269 she made his heart be embalmed, and preserved in a costly shrine, that it might be placed in the same coffin with herself, and interred in the abbey she had founded. Hence its name. It is also known as New Abbey. About the same time two who had been not less tenderly united in their lives were joined in the grave. On June 13, 1250, the remains of Queen Margaret were transferred from the stone coffin in which they had lain for a century and a half, to a shrine profusely adorned with gold and jewels, in the "Lady aisle" of the Abbey of Dunfermline. The body of Malcolm Canmore was exhumed at the same time and placed beside that of his queen. When the relics of Margaret, say the chroniclers, were brought into the Abbey, "the whole temple was filled with a most sweet odour."<sup>2</sup>

Soon the Scottish King had other things to think of. It was in the reign of Alexander III. that the Vikings made their last attempt on Scotland, and received their last and decisive repulse. The Norse power had been overthrown on the mainland of Scotland, but it still subsisted in Orkney and Shetland, and in the isles that stud the western sea.

<sup>1</sup> *Johannis Major, Hist. Scot., lib. iv., cap. 12, p. 155.*

<sup>2</sup> "*Totum templum odor suavisissimus replev*" *Hist. Scot., lib. iv., cap. 12, p. 153.*



onward to the Isle of Man. Each of these islands was an independent principality, under the rule of a Norse prince, who owned Haco, King of Norway, as his feudal lord. These petty sovereignties were a source of danger, for though contemptible individually, they were formidable when combined, and ever ready to attack on the west when England struck in the south. Alexander II. made an attempt to be rid of the danger by stamping out these petty sovereignties. This drew down on his successor the heavy arm of the King of Norway, who saw in the suppression of these island principalities the destruction of his power in Scotland. Now appeared one of the most powerful Norse fleets that had ever been seen off the Scottish coast.

In the middle of August, 1263, a Norse armada, of an hundred and sixty sail, their banners blazoned with the old symbols of terror, the spread raven, and their decks crowded with warriors in chain-armour—terrors of a more substantial kind,—swept round the Mull of Cantyre, seized on the islands of Arran and Bute, and finally came to anchor off Largs. Haco, King of Norway, commanded in person, and we expect the veteran warrior to strike before the Scottish army has had time to muster. But no: the invader saw no defenders on shore, and thought that he might take his time to seize the victory that was already his. Meanwhile the northmen indulged their characteristic love of plundering, gathering booty, but losing priceless hours. One of their predatory expeditions was of an altogether unique and extraordinary kind. Sending sixty of their ships up Loch Long, and dragging their transports across the narrow neck of land betwixt Arrochar and Tarbat, they launched them on Loch Lomond. This was the first and last time that war-ship was seen on these waters. The Norse tempest swept along the lake,



ravaging its islands, sacking the mansions on its shores, slaughtering the inhabitants, and converting a scene of romantic beauty into one of rueful desolation. Having accomplished this exploit the Norsemen returned to their ships.

The King of Norway, as if spell lay on him, remained inactive. Although familiar with battles, Haco suffered himself to be outwitted by his youthful antagonist, the King of the Scots, who, in this instance, showed himself the superior strategist. Alexander sent on board the Norwegian fleet an embassy of bare-footed friars to negotiate terms of peace. The friars came and went, and though peace was not arranged, nor perhaps desired, time was gained. While the friars were negotiating, Haco's position was becoming every moment more perilous. In front of him the Scotch army was mustering in greater numbers, though it concealed itself behind the hills on shore: and in his rear the autumnal storms of the Atlantic were travelling with all speed towards the scene of action, on which they were to play a more important part than man. It was now the end of September, and the shortening days and the lowering skies told Haco that he must give battle, or go back to his own country.

On 1st October, at midnight, a storm set in from the south-west. The winds rose, bringing with them torrents of hail and rain: and the mountain billows rolling in upon the land made sport with Haco's ships, tossing them, with their load of armed warriors and their raven-blazoned banners, to the skies this moment, to dash them on the rocky beach the next. So did the storm deal with one portion of the Norwegian fleet; another portion of it it drove before it up the Clyde. Here the confusion and destruction were not less great than on the shore of Largs. Drifting before

the winds was a mass of war galleys, crashing every moment into each other in the pitchy darkness, some going down with their crews, and others cast as stranded hulks on the banks of the river.

The night had been full of terrors, but the morning was more terrible still, for its light disclosed the horrors of the night. Haco, as he gazed from the deck of his still remaining ships, saw what a blow had fallen upon him. He felt that the stroke had been dealt, not by the Scots, but by mightier forces which were warring against him, the powers, even, of air and ocean, whose fury had been let loose upon him. To add to his perplexity, the storm showed no signs of abating. The look seaward dismayed him, bold veteran as he was, for there was the tempest still heaping up its black clouds, and still rolling onward its mighty surges. It would be work enough for the day, Haco thought, to battle with the waves ; to-morrow, if his ships should hold, and the storm were abated, he would transport his army on shore, and do battle with the Scots.

Haco imagined that the dark powers of witchcraft had been summoned to oppose him. The spell of some witch had raised this violent storm in favour of the Scots. He would conjure the elements to rest by holier arts. Landing on the island of Cumbrae, and extemporising a rude altar, he made his priests say mass. It was in vain. The winds still howled, and the Atlantic billows continued to make sport with his shattered ships.

The coming of the Norwegian armament was known ; in fact, the invaders themselves had notified their approach by the ravages they inflicted on the country as they moved southward, and Alexander's preparations, pushed  
; were now complete. The Scotch army con-  
siderous corps on foot, and a fine body of

cavalry, numbering fifteen hundred horsemen, mostly knights and barons, clad in armour from head to heel, and mounted on Spanish horses. The foot soldiers, armed with spears and bows, were led by Alexander, High Steward of Scotland, great grandfather of Robert II., the first of the Stewart line. The second day opened with the storm only slightly moderated, but Hacon felt that battle must be faced, for provisions were running short, and every hour was inflicting fresh disasters on the fleet. He sent on shore nine hundred fierce and gallant warriors. As they advanced through the surf in their transports, they surprised the enemy's cavalry ranged on the heights above the village of Largs, their bows standing deadly hot against the red storm clouds. A crowd of armed peasants helped to swell their apparent numbers. Flanking them were the men-at-arms in full, their spears and steel helmets, gilded by the rising sun, flashing like fire through the drifting clouds.

The division of the Norwegian army advanced up the height to attack another body sunk in their position on the beach. Soon the two armies were in conflict. The Scots, under the High Steward of Scotland, behaved with signal gallantry and drove back the Norwegian van. The battle now moved down to the shore, and the entire Norwegian force came now ashore. King Hacon, who was in the centre, set off in his transport to the fleet, to bring reinforcements to his men. At this critical moment the storm rising in greater fury, not only made it impossible to send succours to the army on shore, but so shattered the ships as to effect the total or near total destruction of Hacon's fleet. Meanwhile the battle went on, the struggling mass moved to and fro in the shore with ceaseless remorseless din, which even the roar of the winds and the thunder of the surf could not drown. The overwhelming power of the storming of England, the



ringing strokes of a thousand swords on steel armour, and the groans and shrieks of dying warriors. The Scots outnumbered the Norwegians, and the latter, seeing themselves in danger of being enclosed and cut in pieces, formed hastily into a compact body bristling all over with steel spears. The Scotch cavalry attacked but could not break this iron-clad mass, and hew their way into the Norwegian circle.

Toward evening, the tempest lulling a little, reinforcements arrived from the ships. The Norwegians, rousing themselves to their utmost pitch of fury, attacked the Scots, and dislodged such of them as still occupied the heights. But there was not time to recover the fortunes of the day : the fate of the expedition was sealed. The field was covered with Norwegian dead : of the morning's host only a worn and dispirited remnant remained : under cover of the darkness they betook them to their transports, and making their way through a tremendous surf, escaped to their fleet.

Scotland had seen the last of the Dane. In a shattered ship, the remnant of his once magnificent Armada, Haco set sail for Norway, which he was never to reach. He fell sick from fatigue and grief, and died in Orkney. Henceforward the Hebrides were subject to the Scottish sceptre, and the fabric begun in the union of the Picts and Scots was now crowned. Moreover, preparation was made for the "War of Independence." The reduction of the western isles was an indispensable condition of success in that coming conflict. With a multitude of hostile kinglets on its flank, Scotland could never have made good its nationality against a powerful antagonist like England. The battle of Largs brought a signal deliverance to the nation, and is one of the epochs of Scottish history.

But the cloud departed not from the House of Margaret. Alexander's plans, wise and politic, to settle the crown in

his family, all came to nothing. A train of calamities, following in quick succession, desolated his house. His Queen died. She was followed to the tomb by his second son, still a boy. His first born, Alexander, the Prince of Scotland, who would have sat upon the throne after him, next sank into the grave. Then came tidings from Norway that his daughter, wife to King Eric, was dead, leaving an only child, Margaret, the "Maid of Norway." Alexander in the prime of manhood found himself a widower, and childless. He now married Ioleta, the daughter of Count de Dreux, in the hope of retrieving the fortunes of his house; but a great calamity was near. He was returning from Edinburgh, and as he rode along the shore near Kinghorn in the dark, 16th March 1286, his horse stumbled, rolled over the cliff, and Alexander was killed. The universal grief for the King's death was quickly followed by consternation and dismay, not less universal, at the dark night which had descended on Scotland.

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